



The Role of 'Yan-Banga' (Vigilante Group) in Managing Local Security in Wudil Town, Wudil Local Government Area of Kano State

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ABSTRACT

The role of 'Yan-Banga', known as a vigilante, is paramount considering the enormous security challenges the society is bedevilled with in all ramifications. Modern apparatus of crime control and social milieu cannot address the total crimes without the involvement of local security mechanisms. Therefore, this paper examines the vigilante group's overall management of local Security in Wudil town. The document also discusses a brief history of Wudil town to justify the objectives. The concept of security and insecurity has been conceptualized for a clear perspective. The perspectives of various scholars on the term vigilante have also been clarified. The role of Vigilantes in sharing intelligent gathering and surveillance has also been discussed in the paper. The pivotal part of the Vigilante in weekly meetings with settler communities and the active role the Sarkin Barayi played attested that everyone in the society has a role to play regardless of their ugly status. The paper concluded that the desirability of utilizing community policing to strategy security effectiveness is highly significant.

INTRODUCTION

Managing Security during primitive Hausa society was paramount, and everyone was concerned about checkmating frequent crimes. That is why the traditional authority strategically designed crime

control and prevention at the local level. Crime prevention is part of managing Security that deals with an action or actions taken to stop criminal activities from occurring in a community. Crime control is a method designed by the local authority and the government to reduce crime in a society. It is a well-

known fact that before the advent of colonialism, Africa had a system of justice and adjudication hinged on fear of deities which attracted instant sanctions and punishments. Hence, making the people conform to the ethos of the community, but the coming of the Europeans has altered/changed the people's cognitive mapping of what constitutes social order and control through the introduction of new methods leading to the abandonment of the traditional social control patterns, systems and mechanisms that was instant, efficient and effective. This conventional crime relegation control mechanism in favour of modern crime mechanisms has done more harm than good in Nigeria. It has been discovered that the high rate of crimes in northwest Nigeria is increasing daily with less effective measures from the government at all levels. Banditry, kidnapping and other related social vices hindered the socioeconomic development of the region as a whole. This better experience led to the finding of alternatives to address the menace of insecurity in the local community. Adopting the Vigilante security mechanism is the best way to reduce crimes and insecurity (Shehu, 2019).

Concept of Security

It is beyond a reasonable doubt that security is a very vital issue in the survival of any society or nation. This is because society will be rife with lawlessness, conflict, violence, and chaos and eventually collapse without providing Security that could protect life and property. Security is considered as a dynamic condition, which involves the relative ability of a state to counter threats to its core values and interests (Omede, 2011). Security has been described as objective, measures the absence of threats to acquire values, and in a subjective sense, the lack of fear that such matters will be attacked (Wollfers, 1962). Many scholars emphasize the absence of threat to acquire value or tendencies that would undermine national cohesion and peace as a step for determining what security meant. Security is the condition of safety from harm or danger, the defence, protection and the absence of threats to acquire value (Jaje, 2013). The Security of societies, whether primitive or modern, is essential because their survival and development depend upon the government which people willingly surrender their rights and authority to protect them. In a general conception, Security has to do with freedom from danger or threats to a nation which is the ability to preserve and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interest and enhance the well-being of its people. Thus, internal security could be seen as the freedom or the absence of those tendencies which could undermine internal cohesion and the cooperative existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital instructions for the promotion of its core value and socio-political and economic objectives, as well as meeting the legitimate aspirations of the people. Internal Security also implies freedom from danger to life and property (Imobighe cite in Jude 2013). From this point of view, the concept of the Security of any nation encompasses other vital areas such as environmental

protection, social and food security and especially the prevalence of internal peace.

Insecurity in perspective

The insecurity challenges have posed a formidable perspective by forcing the country's political and economic manager and indeed the entire nation, to true loss of their beloved ones, investors and investments and the absence of safety in most of the country and, by and large, the chance of survival of democracy is very narrow because without security, things are hardly possible (Comfort 2013). Insecurity has been viewed as a state of not knowing, a lack of control, and the inability to take defensive acts against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group or make them vulnerable (Onifade et, 2013). It has been examined that insecurity "the state of fear or anxiety stemming from a concrete or alleged lack of protection." (Beland, 2015) Insecurity has continued to threaten the very fabric of national integration and created an ecology of fear, disquiet and anxiety. It has also meted a deadly blow or what has been referred to as "Special bite" to industrial development (Onifade et, 2013). The nature of insecurity differs and varies from one country to another, from one region to another. For instance, in the southwest, the insecurity was exacerbated by army robbery, ethnic militia and hooliganism. In the Northern part of the country, insecurity was characterized by fundamentalism and extremism of religious crises taken over the side. From the Eastern and Southern parts of the country, the major pandemic to insecurity is kidnapping, Niger-delta Militancy, and bunkering among the crimes.

Brief Historical Background of Wudil

Wudil local government area is one of the forty-four LGAs that make up Kano state, Northwest geopolitical region of Nigeria. The headquarters of the LGA is in the town of Wudil, and the LGA comprises towns and villages, which include Achika, Juma, Lajawa, Yarka, Utai, Makera, Kausani, Gware, Dagumawa, and Buda. The estimated population of Wudil LGA is 182,304, with the area's major inhabitants being members of the Hausa/Fulani ethnic division. The Hausa language is commonly spoken in the LGA, while the religion of Islam is widely practised in the area. Notable landmarks in Wudil LGA include the Wudil Model primary school and the Government Secondary School, Wudil. Thus, Wudil covered within latitude and longitude coordinates are 11,794242,8.839032. Wudil is a small city in northern Nigeria, with a population of close to 180,000 people. It is the capital city of a small district, Wudil district, and a small transportation knot near the highway. Wudil LGA occupies a total area of 362 square kilometres and has an average temperature of 34 degrees centigrade. The LGA witnesses two distinct seasons, which are the dry and the rainy seasons, while the average wind speed in the area is put at 9 km/h (Diary, 2022)

Evolution of Traditional Politics and Security Structures in Wudil Records show that the early beginning of Wudil dates back to the 9th Century AD when Abagayawa, from the present-day Gaya, 16 kilometres away from Wudil, on their way to the foot of Dala Hill to excavate iron ore, briefly settled in Wudil near the river bank. Abagayawa decided at the place now referred to as Kukar Dafi, 90 years before Bagauda came to Kano in 1060 AD (Musa and Osi, 2011; Dankawata and Malamin, 2011; Garba, 2011). The activity indicated that for more than ten centuries, inhabitants of Kano province, of which Wudil is an integral part, were capable of producing riches because of the mastery of skills to technologically invent farm implements, defence arsenals, grow food and extract minerals, iron deposits from the soil. Wudil is a flourishing town and a leading commercial centre. Weaving, Embroidery, dyeing, tanning, and pottery greatly improved. Embroidery and tailoring were remarkably enhanced. Other chief articles in the market were hoes, leather products, mats, hide and skin exported to faraway lands in Bornu (North-Eastern Nigeria), Adamawa province, Cameroon Republic and to the North as far as Tripoli (Musa and Osi, 2011). As Abagayawa left Wudil for Kano, historical traditions assert that a community of hunters camped at Garin Dau and later moved into the present Wudil town. These hunters grouped themselves into communities of farmers, fishermen, and blacksmiths. Hence, the emergence of the political structures of Gidan Sarkin Noma (Residence of the head of farmers), Gidan Makera (house of blacksmiths) and later Unguwar Makera (Blacksmiths' Ward) Unguwar Magina (Pottery Ward) (Musa and Osi, 2011). From then on, blacksmithing became one of the famous technological expressions of Wudilawa (Wudil people) practised by early residents, which continues to date. Fishing is one of the prominent professions in Wudil. These fishermen use local fishing materials such as birgi, yan zube, tanka, gora, kalli, and koma (Musa and Osi, 2011). Fishing is an ancient economic activity that gave rise to remarkable profitable value in the pre-colonial period. Trade in fish became popular among the people in pre-colonial Wudil, stimulating migration and attracting many fishermen from their original settlements for better opportunities (Hauwa, 2022).

Prominent among the group that permanently settled in Wudil were Daudu, Disai and Kwaiwa. Daudu became an informal leader uniting and integrating the already decided groups within the framework of justice and equality based on shared common traditions to prosper and rise to eminence, making a great impact in both political and economic spheres (Musa and Osi, 2011; Dankawata, and Malamin, 2011; Garba, 2011). The Dan Daudu (descendent of Daudu) became a figure evolved by the laws and customs of the people and was, therefore, part of the people's cultural heritage. Leadership practised by the traditional Wudil community can be defined as a hereditary system of government in which an individual performs executive, legislative, and judicial roles. The powers exercised by the monarchs were

absolute, constrained by the customary or religious institutions, which performed roles such as appointment, removal of office holders, and superintending within the system (Musa, 2011; Dambazau, 1994).

The Conceptual View on 'Yan Banga (The Vigilantes Group)

This category of the traditional gang of people tagged 'Yan-Tauri' are found virtually in every society in Nigeria, not only in Hausaland. They have their dogs, locally made guns, swords, arrows and bows fortified by charms. They encounter all sorts of criminals, whether at night or during the day, who are dealt with severely. Their sole functions and duties are to be exercised within the traditional limit, and constitutional power is confided on them to arrest and prosecute before the local court or palace court. They engage themselves in spiritualism, an aesthetics one against all odds. Vigilantes are found in every city, town and village with the community's support for greater control of crimes, insecurity menace and social evils. Their role in fighting insecurity and crime control in society is not quantifiable considering their active performance in the fight against Boko-Haram, Banditry and Kidnapping in the social milieu in the country ('Yandaki, 2015; Tauri, 2019; Hauwa, 2022).

The concept of vigilante groups in traditional form is described as unarmed voluntary citizen groups created in local communities to help the security forces confront common crimes and social violence by arresting suspected criminals and handing them over to the Police. Nigerian law recognizes the lawfulness of vigilante groups arresting suspected criminals, provided they are unarmed, and the suspect is immediately handed over to the Police (Report, 2008). The term Vigilante is viewed as neighbourhood or community vigilantes, organized by street associations in cities or villages in rural areas to man street entrances or village gates, as the case may be, at night. They also carry out foot patrols at night to reassure community members that some people are watching over their communities. They are not armed but often carry whistles, which they use to alert the neighbourhoods if there are unwanted "guests" (Chukwuma, 2002).

This kind of informal policing, the historical antecedent, revealed that Vigilante has existed since 1922 as a neighbourhood guard in the USA. But the historical records indicated that Vigilante came into existence in Nigeria in 1983 as a vigilante group during the Buhari regime as part of the efforts to prevent and control crime. Due to its resilient, in 1984, the then Inspector General of Police, Etim Inyang, inaugurated the Police Community Relation Committee (PCRC) in all the States of the Federations and directed Commissioners of Police to urgently revitalize vigilante groups to enable the Police and public to interact regularly in the fight against crime (Kehinde, 2021). Initially, crime control and security management were part of the police

constitutional mandate to protect life and property in the country, but because the Police cannot do it alone without involving the community as policing to share local intelligence, the Vigilante is coopted in managing local Security in Nigeria.

The Various Categories of Vigilante Group

From the African perspective, four typologies of vigilantism have been identified. These include religious vigilantism, ethnic, state-sponsored, and neighbourhood or community vigilantism. The belief is that this category is not rigid or exclusive since one type of group could combine the features of two or more (Chukwuma, 2002).

Vigilante and Managing Local Crime and Security in Wudil Local Government

The empirical studies of traditional informal mechanisms of crime control have evolved in various terms from scholarly views such as "traditional," "customary," "indigenous," "informal," "non-state," "local," "community," as well as "popular," and "participatory," often complexities in both discourse and practice. In some cases, they capture the same social phenomenon, while in others' perspectives, their meanings are quite a momentum (Adegoke, 2008; Yandaki, 2015, Shehu, 2021). Reuben clarified the concept in an attempt to give distinctive differences using the word informal justice system to distinguish the terms of state-administered formal mechanism systems and non-state administrated informal mechanism." (Reuben, 2001; Richard, 1982). The term informal mechanism is used to refer to its basic attributes. It is defined as unofficial (dissociated from state power), non-coercive (dependent rather than force), non-bureaucratic, decentralized, relatively undifferentiated, and non-professional; its substantive and procedural rules are imprecise, unwritten, democratic, flexible, ad hoc, and particularistic (Richard, 1982). Traditional crime control techniques are informal mechanisms or ways used by communities, with particular reference to the Wudil Local Government Area of Kano State from time immemorial and are still relevant for crime control and checks and balances. Traditionally, they controlled crime through a variety of means, including family members, peer groups, community associations, elder councils, Emir and village heads, and Vigilante, among others, whose roles included interpreting the subsisting community's code of conduct and behaviour as passed down from generation to generation. Unlike Western societies, traditional societies did not have written rules to regulate behaviour, but they did have well-established systems for managing crime and maintaining social order (Hauwa, 2022).

Thus, the town Wudil, like other local governments in the Kano state, is not exemptional regarding insecurity as a whole. It recorded significant insecurity in the last coupled years, especially the Boko-Haram factor. According to the researcher, armed robbery,

banditry, kidnapping, rape, occupational crimes, drug peddling, and other crimes of varying magnitudes are rising in Nigeria, particularly in Wudil LGA. Residents in Wudil have been more concerned due to these crimes, which frequently result in jungle justice, mostly with occupational crimes. The issues of crime and deviance have become a topic of conversation among today's citizens. The Western criminal system, which is currently the primary method of crime control, has done little to solve this cultural divide. Worse, modern technical advancements in communication have assisted crime because it is often impossible to express what is unlawful. The current methods of crime control are typically lengthy and costly, with judgments and verdicts always being delayed and with the tendency for justice to be denied and criminals to be released (Hauwa et al., 2022).

Surveillance and Local Intelligence

The tradition of the then political security structures of Wudil, like any other in Hausaland, was centralized with the onus of daily vigilantism. Of course, there is a check and balance in case of a security breach. The palace authority could be well articulated and extended to every village, ward and clan. The chain of transmission of daily intelligence gathering ran from the community head up to the Emir. The degree of surveillance was astonishing because everyone involved, even the leaders, deaf-mutes, the blind, and the beggars, was organized and cooperated. The iota of these security strategies in primordial society is that any complainant could expect to see the Emir or his local headman personally to report the issues or any movement of a very suspicious person. This mechanism of eagle-eye has aided security intelligence reports to traditional authorities with assurance and confidence in the larger society (Last, 2016).

Vigilante Weekly Meetings with Settler Communities in Wudil Town

The weekly meetings with settlers are another security strategy adopted by the Vigilante in Wudil town to ensure no one is left out on identifying crime and criminal activities among the larger populace. This kind of meeting usually occurs at the end of the last week of every month. The leadership of those settler communities, including the youth local association, women association and a security agency representative, will be invited equally at the headward and district head levels. During the meeting, some grey areas will be identified; holistically, a collective decision will be taken to arrest the situation (Shehu, 2022). The agenda of the meeting is cut-across all social vices ranging from youth restiveness, frequent broken marriages, prostitution as well as control of hawkers who come as a result of market day. The resolution is bonded to all and should be adhered to later.

Checking Adaidata Sahu (Tricycle Operators) for Intruders by Vigilante

This strategy has yielded tangible results in checkmating criminals who use the opportunity to kidnap people for ransom. With the tricycle operator union's assistance, some measures are designed to identify criminals or will commit crimes and escape. A special identity card has been created. They also watch any suspicious movement by any tricycle operator at any location. Equally important, the socioeconomic security situation was well monitored, as in the case of the caravan that passed by, which is stopped for search and check, then later allowed to proceed with the journey. And those who want to enter the city or town for commercial activities have to ensure that they are not enemies in disguise. Consequently, it is believed that many peoples or communities in Wudil and Hausaland resorted to adopting alliances or going for natural forces for self-protection. That was why many Hausa communities employed indigenous security strategies; as such, some decided to live in valleys, while other on top of mountains, and in addition to that, some placed formidable fortification or obstacles such as gorges, waters fall, canyons, mountains, rocks, the river between themselves and their aggressor (Felix, 2007).

The Role of Sarkin Baka and 'Yan-Farauta (Chief Hunter and Hunters) in Crime Control in Wudil Town

The function of Sarkin Baka is to look after the hunters. So, all hunters, irrespective of their categories, are under 'Sarkin Baka' control and surveillance. Sarkin Baka is a title found in every place in Hausaland. Originally, the duty of Sarkin Baka was to be in charge of merchants who arrived in the town to trade; also, to find them reasonable accommodation, introduce them to customers, and ensure the safety and Security of their wealth is protected. Not only that, Sarkin Baka has the responsibility to accord accommodation for those strangers who come to visit the Emir. 'Yan-Farauta' is a category of classical men and women who played a pivotal role in cementing the security architecture of the entire Hausa community. Hunters are regarded as '**yanfarauta**' in the Hausa language and live on the edges of urban society. It is believed that every ward of the old city (Birni) of Hausaland had their special group of hunters who they depend on and fight in the eventuality of any challenging group or gangs of criminals who cause havoc or mayhem in the existing peace of the community. The hunters possessed traditional spirituals and were fortified by all sorts of charms, which gave them access to any tick forest or bush no matter how dangerous. They can penetrate, hunt with their dangerous dogs and come out successfully. On several occasions, they successfully engaged in serious encounters with arm-robbers, Kidnapper and bandits. It is a clear testimony to what is happening in Maiduguri where Hunters and Vigilante are fighting Boko-haram shoulder-to-

shoulder with the Nigerian Army as a joint effort code tagged '*Civilian JTF*'. It also contributed a lot in curbing rubbers, Kidnappers and bandits in Wudil town as they fear hunters vehemently simply because the hunters know the spiritualistic tendencies of those criminals ('Yandaki, 2015; Hashimu, 2019).

Sarkin Barayi (The Chief Thieves) in Local Security in Wudil Town

To address petty crimes among the Wudil people, the traditional authority decided to coopt another mechanism to deal with social crime holistically. This is where the issue of cooperating with Sarkin Barayi came into Livestream, a common phenomenon in Hausa society in the traditional epoch. The title plays a pivotal role in checkmating frequent handpicking, stealing and bungling of people belonging and whereabouts. The position of Sarkin Barayi is championed by a former popular thief who decided to retire from the professional criminal act. Repenting before traditionally constituted authority made him to earned respect as he made a public confession voluntarily. An ordinance to work with the authority in fishing out those criminals in society is consolidated and realistic (Maidaji, 2019).

Sarkin-Barayi serves the function of identifying stolen properties and the thief who stole them by asking him to return them to him immediately. Usually, this process transpires once the missing belongings are reported before the chief thieves. The stolen properties will return to the owner without much difficulty and delay. Where any thief bungled someone's house; the principal thief knows who is behind the operation. Therefore, by his spiritual power possessed, direct matching order is given to that thief to surrender himself before the chief thieves. There are incentives given to principal thieves for stolen belonging that are recovered and returned (Maidaji, 2019).

The Traditional methods of Security surveillance and Crime Control in Wudil

Traditional methods of controlling crime and maintaining Security are not universally acceptable as they involve cultural aspects of concern. The irony of these cultural patterns is dynamic because when people are boned together, by strong cohesion, by bounds of community consciousness, well tribal transaction, crime can equally be reduced to the barest minimum (Ayuk, 2013). The traditional Hausaland security during the pre-colonial period was unique in that the core value of rulership was to provide an enabling environment where the business of the day ran smoothly. The rulers, then, had a desire for the security of life and protection of peoples' properties from inside and external aggression because that was one of their cardinal principles guidelines as a constituted authority to lead their people humanitarian, thereby prompting the development of perimeter walls around the shelter of trees and barricades at the cave entrance. The major

cities and towns were walled around with concrete fences (Atolagbe, 2011). These barricades of sophisticated walls assume that the whole city and far beyond are under protection and surveillances from any unexpected danger that might have occurred. Some of these walls' historical remains are still there and very much alive as a momentum while others have perished, demolished and meltdown due to human factors.

CONCLUSION

The issue of security is a collective responsibility not only for the government alone but also for every individual in the society. Modern security strategy cannot complement effectively without applying local mechanisms to address the challenge of insecurity holistically. Community policing is inevitable; as such, it gives viable results comprehensively. Wudil, as part of the Hausa society, could not achieve relative Security without the collective efforts of both Vigilantes and other stakeholders. Therefore, managing contemporary insecurity in the community has to do with the vigilante groups in particular as a complementary outfit, in addition to the conventional security agencies in Nigeria.

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