

Interrogating Security Agencies: The Role of the Police Force in the 2015 General Elections in Bayelsa State, Nigeria

EBIPAMOWEI OKOYEN, MADUAWUCHI ELEM
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Abstract. The problem of insecurity in elections in Nigeria and the role of security agencies have continued to occupy the minds of public policy analysts and academics for quite some time now. Despite these concerns, the problem has continued to persist. As a result, this paper examined the issue of security agencies focusing on the role of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) in the 2015 general elections in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. To achieve this broad objective, data were collected from a sample of 370 police officers made up of Three Hundred and Sixty (360) questionnaire respondents and ten (10) key informants. Relying on the systems theory, descriptive statistics as well as thematic analysis for the data analysis, the study found among others that although the Nigerian Police Force played a significant role in providing security during the 2015 general elections, training and funding were major challenges that undermined their capacity to be efficient in this regard. In light of this, the study concludes that inadequate training and insufficient funding of security agencies such as the Nigerian Police Force are strong challenges to security enforcement during election periods in the country. As a result, the study recommends among other things that, security agents should be well trained and equipped to better manage the insecurity situations associated with conducting elections in the country. This is in addition to improving on the funding of the security outfits to ensure effective delivery of their security duties.

Keywords: Security agencies, police force, 2015 general elections, Bayelsa, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

People all over the world have various systems of interactions. The forms of interactions either at the family level, community level or otherwise, are all determined by abiding rules, norms and values. In other words, the abiding principles and rules bring about social order. One of the ways of identifying a society powered by social order is the manner they rule or govern themselves. Interestingly, most contemporary societies around the world now tend to believe in the system of democracy because it is participatory. Even though most democratic countries are not perfect, it is believed that it involves a governance framework that is a product of the people, by the people and for the people. In clearer terms, people are chosen to represent the vast majority of others in the decision making process of society (Nwolise, 2006; Nweke, 2006). This process of choosing representatives to the decision making level takes various forms. For instance, casting of lots, election, inheritance, military, and so on. However, the concern here is on the process whereby people cast votes to choose a representative using a well-structured format, otherwise called Election.

The historical trajectory of Nigeria which can be periodized into to the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial stages is replete with experiences of various forms of governance system that require the choosing of representatives. In the pre-colonial stage, we had the society being governed by chiefs and kings who controlled the means of production. Also, in the colonial stage,

the British ruled through the already existing traditional structures. For instance, we had the Sokoto Caliphate, headed by the Sultan of Sokoto, the Benin Empire, headed by the Oba of Benin, the Oyo Empire, headed by the Alaafin and so on. At the independence stage and with the emergence of the post-colonial social structure, the country experienced both military and democratic governance. However, under the military, the governance behaviour was largely determined by the use of force and repressive laws making it highly dictatorial. Nevertheless, several democratic experiments took place until 1999 when it is believed that this form of governance became relatively stable in the country.

It is important to note that a critical aspect of the democratic government is the process of election. In this regard, an election is where the people of any society cast their votes to choose a person or candidate that will represent or govern them at the decision making level. It is a process where the people get involved voluntarily because the elected person will definitely control the allocation of the means of production either to their favour or disfavour. The people therefore, having that consciousness come out to vote and also be voted for. The distribution of political power is also inclusive. This informs the reason why these days the “Do or Die” syndrome comes into the election process (Okara, 2014). Election is a people oriented system of choosing representatives, and that is the reason, it is preferred above others in choosing leaders world over.

Succinctly, there is no single model of elections or democracy that is universally applicable. An election is unique and defined, not only by the electoral rules but also shaped by the social values, politics, religion, history, and culture of the people. In the same way, the security of an election is sacrosanct and integral, and is unique to the circumstances surrounding its conduct. The stakes of any given election are different even if it is held periodically in the same country due to the changing forces that shape the national interest and corresponding political agenda (Idowu, 2014). The threat profile at the period of elections also influence or make it

unique. Similarly in a sporting event, the rivalry between opposing teams entails competition within an accepted set of rules but does not allow for the use of violence to seek victory. Further to that, if violence does occur, it can lead to disqualification of players (candidates), teams (political parties), an amendment of the result or abandonment of the competition. As such, the emergence of electoral violence is not a result of the process being followed but signals a critical departure from the accepted rules that govern the process (Carpel, 2018; Elem, 2018).

The issue of security during an election comes up at all stages; the pre-electoral, electoral, and post electoral stages. As such, all players or stake-holders are supposed to be involved. Contemporarily both regional and non-regional, and non- governmental organizations are involved. Every election is bound by a legal framework. In Nigeria today, and probably elsewhere in the world, the legal framework for the management of elections is potentially one of the major sources of insecurity and instability. In fact, the recent impasse between the National Assembly and the Presidency over whose election comes first in the electoral framework is a good example. If not properly handled, the injuries in the course of struggle will continue to hunt the process. Over the years, Nigeria elections have been marred with violence that is why it is necessary for the role of security agencies to always come to play.

This work will in addition proffer solutions that will lead to better police roles in election. In doing this, the work also identified that other works missed out on the role poor motivation can play in effective police coverage of election in the area of this study. Again, other works concentrated effort on discussing the Nigeria general elections, with little or no attention on the role of the Police Force in Bayelsa State during the 2015 general elections. It is a bid to fill this gap in the literature that this study is focused on the issue of Security agencies and Nigerian elections with emphases on the role of the Police Force in Bayelsa State in the 2015 elections.

In light of this, the objectives of the study are:

- To examine the real role Nigeria Police played in -2015 election in the area of this study.
- To establish if Nigeria Police were properly trained to handle election duties in this area of study.
- To establish the role of funding in the underperformance of security agencies in the area of the study.

The Hypotheses include:

- The more Nigeria Police play their constitutional electoral roles according to their duty ethics, the more they become objective in their election duties.
- The more Nigeria Police are ill-trained in their duties, the more in-efficient they become in election duties.

2. Review of Related Literature

Nigeria is a heterogeneous country, made up of various ethnic groups and tribes. Each group always politicizes their ethnicity by way of ensuring that their people are in charge of government power. Again, election which is an instrument to choose leaders who will occupy government position requires the activities or support of the security agencies, in order to ensure effectiveness, and free and fair process. The role of the security agencies in the conduct of the election cannot be overemphasized. It was earlier identified that the security agencies used during election in Nigeria includes: the police, DSS, and NSCDC, and the Armed Forces. The high spate of cyclic conflict and insecurity (Raimi, 2017) in Nigeria may affect election success, hence the need for using security agencies. For instance, it was proven that the major reason given for the general elections postponement of the 2015 general elections from their initial dates to March 28 and April respectively, were security issues.

Carpel (2018) posited that the role of security agencies in election has become an issue. He asserted that ordinarily in advanced democracies, security agencies are rarely seen within the precincts of the voting area and

certainly do not enforce a lock down of the town as would be expected across the country. However, the role of security men became an issue after the elections in Ekiti state in 2014 where the All Progressive Congress (APC) has alleged that security men were used to obstruct in their officials while at the same time giving the way to their rivals, the People Democratic Party (PDP). This made some people to be at the forefront of pushing for the exclusion of security men from the electoral process. There have been various involvements of security agencies in election, which acts negate the expected roles of security agencies in Nigeria. Most politicians are accused of always using the services of security agencies to commit their evil during election. Instead of ensuring the protection of electoral process and ensuring the total maintenance of peace, they engage in assisting politicians and their things in ensuring easy access for evacuation of electoral materials.

This attitude of security agencies in Nigeria as against their original or expected roles has created fears in the minds of the citizen, if they should rely solely on security agencies in securing of election in Nigeria. If the security personnel are responsible in effective discharge of their duties, there will be lesser challenge, in the problem of inconclusive and suspension of election results in Nigeria. However, despite the ills of the security agents (Joel, 2012), it is still their duty to ensure security in elections. There should therefore be good working relationship with the people (Charles, 2015). Obviously, the behavior of the “bad eggs” in the police and other security services has made some Nigerians to lose confidence in these organizations. This is very bad for the country because many people no longer report crimes to them as good citizens should do. Hence, some now doubt their integrity in the monitoring of the elections.

For the police, the armed forces and other security agencies shortcomings to be connected to improve their performances in a democratic structure, our security agents must be made to realize through political education that it is the wealth created by the people of Nigeria that sustains them and as a result, they should realize that all their uniforms, kits, and salaries are from

the wealth of the nations. Hence they should ensure neutrality in election, and focused majorly in securing electoral processes. Looking at security agencies and elections in Nigeria, there is need for security agents to improve on the relationship between them and the people during elections. The people will not be afraid because of the relationship and trust promoted. This also will help the security agents to stop treating people who report electoral crime to them as the first suspect. By treating honest people who report electoral crimes, through harassment, delays and “come today, come tomorrow” mentality, the people will refuse to help the security agents with vital information that lead to stoppage of electoral violence or crime (Nwaenyi, 2011; Charles, 2015). Furthermore, the relationship which exists between security agencies and election process are imperative, and if properly sustain will lead to good conduct of election.

Bayelsa state is one of the state in southern region in Nigeria, precisely in the Niger Delta. In 2015 gubernatorial elections, the People’s Democratic Party (PDP) emerge winner with Seriake Dickson as the flag bearer. The elections conducted in 2015 were characterized with violence, killings, intimidation and harassment by political thugs. Considering the outcome of the election held on the 5th of December, 2015 the military and other security agencies were heavily criticized for their alleged complicity in the widespread violence, ballot-snatching and hostage taken that allegedly characterized the polling. These acts show that despite the huge security personnel sent for the election, it was unable to sustain a peaceful process. This however led to the military defending its position as accused by the opposing political parties. Accordingly, the People Democratic Party’s (PDP) accused the military of colluding to rig the election as did the All Progressive Congress (APC) (Sam, Umeh & Sobechi, 2015). Considering the violent nature of the election, Sam et al (2015) posited that the military claimed its officials arrested, seventeen (17) suspected political things and recovered several arms and ammunition during the governorship election. All these acts are dent to the tenets of democracy and shows that Nigeria is practicing

pseudo democracy. The military also asserted that several political thugs stole permanent voter’s card. Again, 30 PVCs at Ekeremor area of Bayelsa state, were retrieved from three youths and were apprehended and duly handed over to the police for further investigation by the military.

According to the statement by Sam et al (2015), it was gathered that despite the huge security officials that ranged from the military, police and civil defence, southern ijaw results were not declared. Some were of the opinion that the APC leaders and stalwarts used the Army, Navy, Police and other security agencies to intimidate the other political parties. The election held in the Southern ijaw led to the death of five persons as stated by Mr. Iworiso –Markson (premier times). These allegations were also denied by police who also claimed that the corpse of those killed cannot be found even when they were all over the media; hence, election in Nigeria is no longer secured despite the huge security personnel sent for ensuring free and fair elections. People have totally lost confidence in the security of our nation, most of the security agents are believed to accept bribe and engage fully in electoral malpractices, against normal professional practice. These acts affected elections in Bayelsa and other state election in Nigeria. It was however learnt and observed that the 2015 presidential election and national legislative election in Bayelsa was not all that violent compared to the governorship election of December 5th, which led to arrest, harassment of security agents and political thugs, and other violent means to discourage the peaceful nature of the election.

3. Theoretical Framework

This work is anchored on the systems theory. As postulated by Adams (cited in Brian, 2008:64) systems theory is an input-output process. According to this theory, it is the quality of input invested in any part of society that determines how much output that the part delivers to society as a whole. Using the system theory, it is the contention of this study that bad inputs, in terms of inadequate preparation as well as funding of the Nigerian security agencies during election

periods is likely to necessitate an equally bad output such as ineffective performance of security agencies during election duties as well as negative election outcomes. The reverse is usually the case when the input is adequate and good enough.

Systems theory more like functionalism sees society as being made up of parts that are intricately tied together in terms of output and input functions in order to make the society stable. It is a basic assumption of the theory that parts are interdependent and interrelated in such a way that they account for the survival of the larger social system. More than other theories, the systems theory is particularly concerned with analyzing society from the point of view of the functional prerequisites that each part must perform if society is to survive.

Applied to the present study, the system theory gives one a better appreciation of the fact that it takes concerted efforts on the part of all stakeholders to deliver effective results during elections in any society. It is the contention of the study, that the current behaviour of security agencies during election periods can only be understood from the perspective of the systems theory given the fact that it is a network of different social sectors in society for the purpose of drawing core competencies dealing with societal problems and achieving effective and efficient results.

The basic assumptions of the systems theory which are that society is made up of interrelated systems and subsystems that are in constant interaction to promote the general system's wellbeing is particularly very relevant to the understanding of the role of security agencies during the 2015 general elections in Bayelsa State. In this sense, security agencies and the role they play more than anything else provide a platform where the tenets of systems theory are clearly manifested. This is because, all ramifications, the security agencies such as the police constitute a major part of the system and it is believed that when they follow their constitutional role without any negative influence, they end up contributing to the survival of the system in this case through their election duties. As a result, the systems theory provides the best possible analytical parameter to frame a clear narrative of the roles that the

police force played in the 2015 general elections in Bayelsa State and how these affected the overall outcome of the elections.

4. Methodology

The setting for this research is Bayelsa State, located in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The research design that was adopted for this study is the survey design. This is because a survey design makes it possible to gather vast amount of information on time. There have been various elections in Nigeria but this study is narrowing down to the 2015 general elections in Bayelsa State. The population of the study comprised of all the 3,683 Police Officers serving in Bayelsa State (Nigeria Police Force, Bayelsa State, 2018). The sample size for this study is 360 Police Officers determined using the Taro Yamane formula as represented thus $n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$

where n is the expected sample size, N is the total population which is equal to 3,683 and e is the level of significance which in this case is 0.005. The study adopted the stratified, simple random and purposive sampling techniques. In light of this, the study focused on the 24 Police Divisions. However, 10 divisions were randomly selected and 36 respondents each were drawn from each of the divisions making 360. To select the respondents, the stratified random sampling method was first used to divide the sample by gender and proportionate simple random sampling was used to select respondents so as to ensure that the sample is a reflection of the size of the population of either males or females. The simple balloting method was used given the existence of a list of all the police officers which formed the sampling frame. In addition to the 360 respondents, 10 key informants were purposively selected for the interview sessions. The key informants were made up of key stakeholders in the election process such as major party leaders in the state, judiciary members, senior ranking officers of other security outfits such as the Army and the State Security Service among others. As a result, the sample size grew to 370. The primary data for the study were gathered using questionnaire and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) while secondary data were gotten from published and

unpublished materials. A number of data analysis techniques were combined to interpret the data. These are the descriptive statistics; the Chi-square (χ^2) statistical tool is employed to test the various hypotheses and the thematic method for the KII sessions.

This section presents the data in analytical form as well as the results derived from the process. Out of the 360 questionnaire that were distributed, 342 were collated for analysis. This amounts to a 95 percent return rate. Hence, the section is outlined in such a way that the socio-demographic information is presented first, followed by the information related to the objectives and the hypotheses and the thematic analysis of the KII data. Lastly, the discussion of findings section logically follows.

5. Results and Discussions

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Information

Age Distribution of Respondents		
Age in Years	Frequency	Percentage
Below 20	11	3.2
20-29	60	17.5
30-39	218	63.7
40-49	45	13.2
50and above	8	2.3
Total	342	100
Sex of Respondents		
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	253	74.0
Female	89	26.0
Total	342	100
Marital Status of Respondents		
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	86	25.1
Married	211	61.7
Divorced/Separated	33	9.6
Widow/Widower	12	3.5
Total	342	100
Education of Respondents		
Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
No Formal Education	0	0.0
Primary Education	16	4.7
Secondary education	219	64.0
Tertiary Education	85	24.9
Others	22	6.4
Total	342	100
Religion of Respondents		
Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Christian	198	57.9
Muslim	105	30.7
Traditional Religion	17	5.0
Others	22	6.4
Total	342	100

Table 1 above shows the socio-demographic information of respondents in this study. The first part of the table captures the age distribution of respondents and out of 342 of them, 11(3.2%) were below the age of 20 years, 60(17.5%) of them fall between the age bracket of 20-29 years, furthermore, 218(63.7%) are within the age bracket of 30-39 years, 45(13.2%) of the respondents are between 40-49 years of age, while 8(2.3%) of them are 50 years and above. Next is the sex composition of the respondents and it is easy to see that 253 (74%) of the total respondents are males, while 89(26%) of them are females. This is followed by the marital status of the respondents and it can be deciphered that 86(25.1%) of the respondents are single, 211(61.7%) of them are married, 33(9.6%) of them are either divorced or separated from their spouses, while 12(3.5%) of them are either widows or widowers. Also, data on the education of respondents reveals that 16(4.7%) of the respondents had attended primary school, 219(64%) of them have secondary school education, 85(24.9%) of them said tertiary education, while 22(6.4%) of them said others. Furthermore, information on the religious affiliation of the respondents shows that 198(57%) of the respondents are Christians, 105(30.7%) of them are Muslims, while 17(5%) of them practice African Traditional Religion and 22(6.4%) of them said they practice other kinds of religion.

Substantive Data

In this section, the objectives are restated and the related data are presented in charts to enable a pictorial understanding of the results derived. This is followed by the presentation of the test of the hypotheses and interpretation of results.

Evaluation of Objectives

Objective 1: To examine the real role Nigeria Police played in -2015 election in the area of this study.

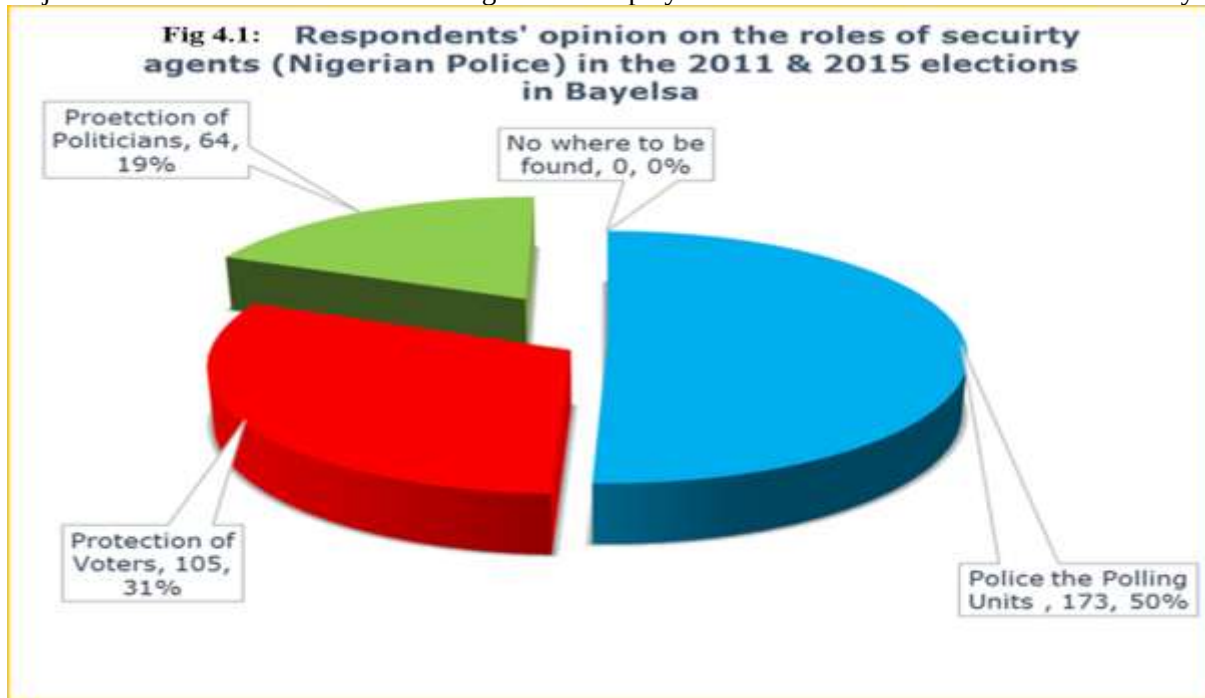


Figure 4.1 above is a pie chart showing respondents' opinion the roles of security agencies especially the Nigerian Police Force in the 2015 general elections in Bayelsa State. From the information presented in the chart, it is easy to see that 173(50%) of them said it is to guard the polling units, 105(31%) of the respondents said it is to protect voters, while 64(19%) of them said it is to protect politicians.

Objective 2: To establish if Nigeria Police were properly trained to handle election duties in this area of study.

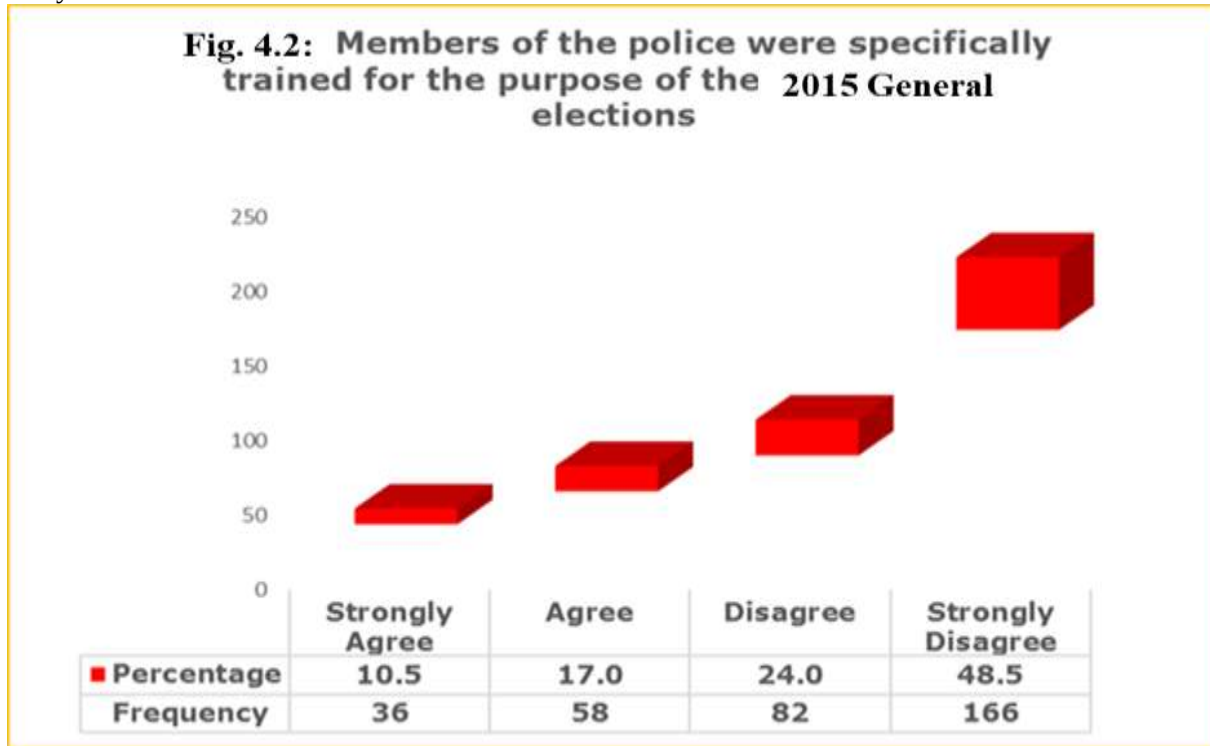


Figure 4.2 above shows data on whether members of the police were specifically trained for the purpose of the 2015 general elections in Bayelsa State. From the data, it can be seen that 36(10.5%) of the respondents strongly agree as to whether they had any training during the periods in questions. 58(17%) of them agree, 82(24%) of them disagree, while 166(48.5%) of the respondents strongly disagree.

Objective 3: To establish the role of funding in the underperformance of security agencies in the area of the study.

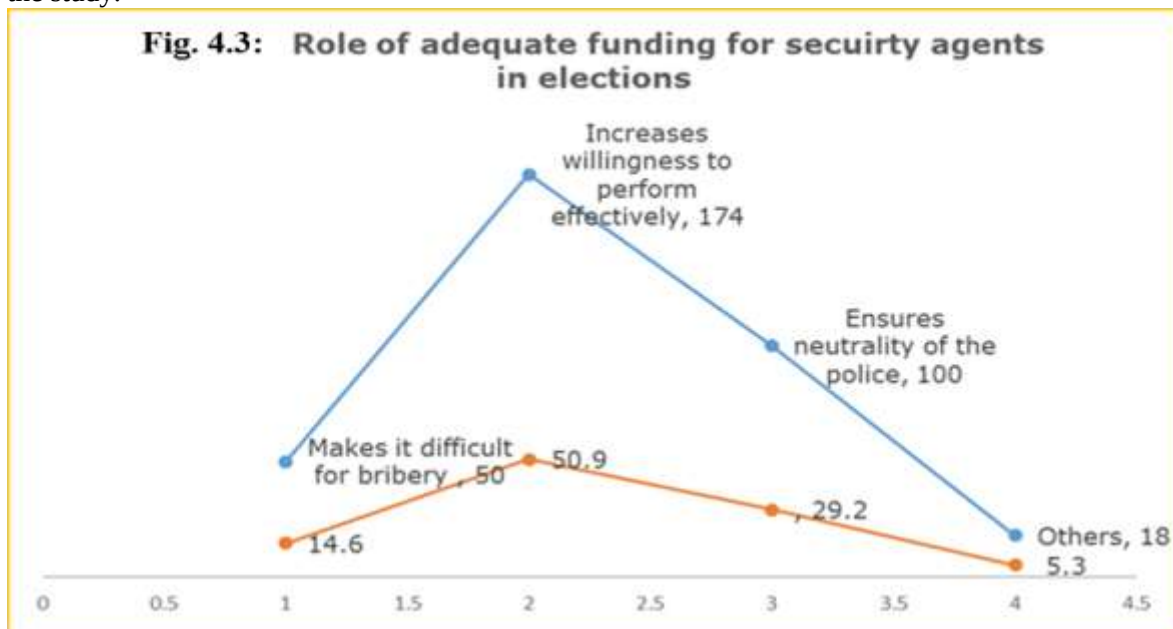


Figure 4.3 above shows data on the role of adequate funding for security agencies in the elections in Bayelsa State. From the data, it can be seen that 50(14.6%) of the respondents said adequate funding makes it difficult for the security agents to be bribed, 174(50.9%) of them said it increases their willingness to perform effectively, 100(29.2%) of them said it ensures neutrality of the police during elections, while 18(5.3%) of them said others.

Test of Hypotheses

1. The more Nigeria Police play their constitutional electoral roles according to their duty ethics, the more they become objective in their election duties.

Table 2: Strictly adhering to their constitutional role enables the police to be more objective during elections

	SA	A	D	SD	
Male	130	95	21	7	253
Female	49	18	10	12	89
Total	179	113	31	19	342

The data in Table 2 above shows respondents' opinion on whether strict adherence by the police force to their constitutional roles is likely to make them more objective during elections. The data shows that 179 of the respondents strongly agree, 113 of them agree, 31 disagree, while 25 of them strongly disagree.

Table 3: Chi-square computation for hypothesis 1

Category	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(o-e/e) ²
Male	130	132.42	-2.42	5.85	0.04
	95	83.59	11.41	130.11	1.56
	21	22.93	-1.93	3.74	0.16
	7	14.06	-7.06	49.78	3.54
Female	49	46.58	2.42	5.85	0.13
	18	29.41	-11.41	130.11	4.42
	10	8.07	1.93	3.74	0.46
	12	4.94	7.06	49.78	10.07
Chi-Square	$\chi^2=$				20.39

Source: Data derived from Table 2 above & computed using Microsoft excel 2013

From the table above, the chi-square χ^2 calculated value for hypothesis 1 is as follows:

$$\text{Chi-Square} = \chi^2 = \frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$$

Where o= observed frequency

e= expected frequency

Note that expected value is calculated by multiplying the row total by column total for each response and dividing by total number of respondents. After this, chi-square calculated value is compared with chi-square table value based on the calculated degree of freedom (df). Hence, to ascertain the degree of freedom the following formula applies.

$$DF = (R-1) (C-1)$$

$$= (2-1) (4-1)$$

$$= 1 \times 3$$

Therefore DF =3

At 3 DF, the table value of χ^2 at 0.05 level of significance is =7.82

Decision rule: The general accepted decision rule for the application of chi-square χ^2 test states that: Accept null hypothesis if calculated value is less than the table value and reject hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than table value. In this study, since calculated value for χ^2 is 15.63 and table value is 7.82, the hypothesis which states that “The more Nigeria Police play their constitutional electoral roles according to their duty ethics, the more they become objective in their election duties” is hereby accepted. Given the weight of the computed value of the chi-square when compared to the table value, it is safe to submit that there is a significant relationship between the strict adherence to constitutional roles by the police and their ability to be more objective during election processes in Bayelsa State.

2. The more Nigeria Police are ill-trained in their duties, the more in-efficient they become in election duties.

Table 4: Poor training may make the police inefficient in election duties

	SA	A	D	SD	
Male	90	89	42	32	253
Female	37	18	15	19	89
Total	127	107	57	51	342

The data in Table 4 above shows respondents’ opinion on whether poor training is likely to make members of the police force inefficient in dealing with election duties. The data shows that 127 of the respondents strongly agree that when the police are ill-trained, they turn out to be inefficient when performing election duties, 107 of them agree to this, 57 disagree, while 51 of them strongly disagree.

Table 5: Chi-square computation for hypothesis 2

Category	O	E	O-E	(O-E) ²	(o-e) ²
Male	90	93.95	-3.95	15.60	0.17
	89	79.15	9.85	96.92	1.22
	42	42.17	-0.17	0.03	0.00
	32	37.73	-5.73	32.81	0.87
Female	37	33.05	3.95	15.60	0.47
	18	27.85	-9.85	96.92	3.48
	15	14.83	0.17	0.03	0.00
	19	13.27	5.73	32.81	2.47
Chi-Square	$\chi^2=$				8.69

Source: Data derived from Table 4 above & computed using Microsoft excel 2013

From the table above, the chi-square χ^2 calculated value for hypothesis 2 is as follows:

$$\text{Chi-Square} = \chi^2 = \frac{(o-e)^2}{e}$$

Where o= observed frequency

e= expected frequency

Note that expected value is calculated by multiplying the row total by column total for each response and dividing by total number of respondents. After this, chi-square calculated value is compared with chi-square table value based on the calculated degree of freedom (df).

Hence, to ascertain the degree of freedom the following formula applies.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{DF} &= (R-1) (C-1) \\ &= (2-1) (4-1) \\ &= 1 \times 3 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore DF =3

At 3 DF, the table value of χ^2 at 0.05 level of significance is =7.82

Decision rule: The general accepted decision rule for the application of chi-square χ^2 test states that: Accept null hypothesis if calculated

value is less than the table value and reject hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than table value. In this study, since calculated value for χ^2 is 8.69 and table value is 7.82, the hypothesis which states that “The more Nigeria Police are ill-trained in their duties, the more inefficient they become in election duties” is hereby accepted. However, due to the value of the chi-square computed figure, it is the submission here that the relationship between the fact that poor training leads to inefficiency of the Nigerian police during election duties is not significant.

Key Informant Interview Data

Following the KIIs, three important themes emerged that formed the sub-headings under which the results are discussed here. Below, the themes are discussed and supported with verbatim quotes from the interviewees where necessary.

The Roles of Security Agencies in Elections

The outcome of the KII concerning the roles of security agencies in elections shows clearly that the Nigerian Police Force actually have key roles to play during elections. The roles range from providing security during elections and ensuring the order even after election periods. One of the key informants had this to say “the security agencies especially the police are by law enabled to ensure the safety of lives and properties during and after elections” (Male KII Participant aged 48 years old). In support of this, some of the participants made it clear that the roles of the security agencies are clearly enshrined in the electoral laws of the country. However, interviewees seem to agree that security agencies are usually compromised making it difficult for them to stick to their constitutional roles. In most cases, some of them see election periods as the time to make money from politicians hence, they are easily swayed to support parties in return for cash. This makes it really difficult for the smooth operation of security agencies during elections.

Training of Security Agencies for Election

On the issue of training, the outcome of the interviews showed that very little effort is made to build capacity of security forces to handle

election duties. This is because of the erroneous belief that the security agencies are already trained without necessarily seeing the need for specific security duties such as election periods. Most of the interviewees agreed that the security agents do not have any special training targeted at security duties for election purposes. One of the interviews is quoted to have said that “there is no need for further training since all the security agencies have already undergone trainings in their various security outfits before joining” (Female KII participant aged 42 years). However, another who is an INEC staff was quick to add that despite their previous trainings, it is important that they are retrained specifically to handle election duties.

Funding for Security Agents

Concerning funding, the KII participants unanimously agreed that security funding is usually very inadequate. According to them, this creates security loopholes especially when the issue of poor remuneration for the police is benchmarked with this. However, the outcome is strongly in favour of the fact that when funding of security is not adequate whether during elections or any other security duty, the performance of the security agencies is usually undermined because most of them would focus on making money from the politicians thereby jettisoning their constitutional role in this regard. It is believed that “part of the reason why the general elections are usually marred by violence, ballot snatching and killings involving some security agencies is because of poor funding for them” (A Male security officer aged 39 years old). Similarly, some of the KII participants point out that the 2015 elections had security challenges because of low funding and insufficient security equipment to fight violence during such elections. They point out that the police force and other security agencies usually put their lives on the line when they work under low funding regimes during election periods.

6. Discussion

The discussion of findings in this section is done in line with the objectives that guided the study. The first finding of the study dealt with objective 1 and related data were presented in

Figure 4.3 above and the result showed that security agents especially the Nigerian Police Force played the role of providing security for election materials at the polling units. This finding also support that of Sam, Sobechi, Umeh, (2015) who in their report proved that the Military performed the function of safeguarding lives and properties during the 2015 general elections.

The second finding in this study resulted from the second objective and the relevant data were presented in Figure 4.2 above. The results showed that showed that 72.7% of the respondents had negative views concerning whether the police had any form of training preparatory to the elections. This finding supports that of Ukwu (2015) who pointed out the absence of training of security personnel as a key gap in election preparations in Nigeria. Again, this was validated by the result of the chi-square test for hypotheses 2 above.

The third finding which is the sixth was triggered by the third objective and the related data are captured in Figure 4.3 above. The results showed that funding has a way of making security agents to underperform during elections. This is usually the case because when there is adequate funding, security agents are not easily bribed and they tend to perform their election duties effectively. This finding supports that of Charles (2015) who argued in his study that poor funding of security agencies during elections in Nigeria is a major setback to the security of lives and properties.

7. Conclusion

It is important to stress that participants in this study showed high level enthusiasm and willingness to respond to issues concerning security agencies and Nigeria elections especially the Police Force. This is not farfetched from the obvious fact that respondents felt that it was high time for people to understand their plight during general elections in the study area. Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the Nigerian Police Force actually do have the constitutional backing to take part in general

elections such as the 2015 elections. In this regard, their roles are backed up by the constitution and properly defined by the electoral act as provided by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC). However, it is also the conclusion of this study that these constitutional roles have been strongly undermined by insufficient funding which makes it easy for the members of the police force to be vulnerable to bribery especially from the politicians thereby reducing their capacity to be neutral and effective in performing their roles. This has a negative influence on the overall outcome of the elections. Lastly, the study also concludes that the security agencies especially the Nigerian police force do not get specific training that is tailored towards preparing them for elections such as that of the year 2015. This may be as a result of the underlying belief that the police force are already trained to deal with matters of security whether those related to elections or not.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions reached in this study, the following recommendations have been proffered:

- Public Enlightenment: There is need for the INEC in partnership with the National Orientation Agency (NOA) to carryout pre-election enlightenment of the general public on the constitutional roles of the police and other security agencies during general elections. This will help create the much needed awareness amongst the public on the subject matter and perhaps act as a check on the behaviour of the police.
- Security Training: The need to properly train and or educate members of the security agencies on election behaviour and their responsibilities is particularly necessary. This is because every security situation requires specific skills to manage associated security threats or risks.
- Security Funding: It is important to ensure that funding levels are at per with the required duties of security agencies

during election periods. When funding is short, it usually affects the ability of the police and other security agencies to be neutral. Needless to say that this promotes conditions for bribery and other election related frauds.

- Proper sanctions: Having satisfied issues of enlightenment, training and funding, it is pertinent to add that the authorities of all security agencies including the police force should apply stiff sanctions when members of their agencies are found to have violated their constitutional roles during elections.

References

- Brian, T. (2008). *Systems Analysis in Contemporary Sociological Theory*. USA, Allen and Willey.
- Carpel, J. (2018). The likely way out of Zimbabwe's crisis. <http://www.cfr.org/bwg/likely-way-out-zimbabwe-election-crisis> retrieved 4/10/2018
- Charles, I. S. (2015). 2015 Elections: Role of police and other security agencies. www.policereport.nig/edu.com. Retrieved 12/9/2018.
- Elem, M. (2018). Government and herdsmen/farmers crisis in Nigeria: Challenges and panacea. A paper presented to International Institute of Professional Security, Rivers State chapter held at University of Port Harcourt Institute of Petroleum Studies on 22/9/2018
- Idowu, J. (2014). *Inter-security agencies conflicts at Nigeria's Borders: A challenge to Nigeria's National security*. Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press.
- Joel, T.E. (2012). Evaluation of the role of security agencies in general election in Nigeria. An M.Sc project presented to the Department of Public Administration and Local Government, University of Nigeria Nsukka
- Nwaenyi, K. E. O (2011). *Issues in Nigerian Government and Politics*. Owerri: Cape Publishers Int'l Ltd.
- Nweke, K. (2006). *Fundamental Elements of Government and Politics*. Port Harcourt: Rodi Printing and Publishing Company.
- Nwolise, O.B.C. (2006). *National Security and Sustainable Democracy*. Ibadan: John Archers.
- Okarah, C.I (2014). Causes and effects of insecurity in Nigeria: The challenges and relevance of the Nigeria police force as a panacea. A Thesis Submitted to the Department of Public Administration. University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Raimi, L. (2017). Poverty, Monetization of Conflict and Insecurity in the Niger Delta Region. *International Journal of Operational Research in Management, Social Sciences & Education*, 3(2): 42-51, September.
- Sam, O, Sobechi, L & Umeh, K (2015). Our Role in Bayelsa Polls. The Military Retrieved 10/09/2018 from m. guardian. Ng.
- Ukwu, J. (2015). The Role of Security Agencies during Elections. Retrieved 12/09/2018.