

Spatial Analysis of Police Station/Post Distribution in the Pursuance of Urban Security in Nigeria

J. J. Dukiya

Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Federal University of Technology, Minna.

-----ABSTRACT-----

Security generally can be defined as freedom and protection from danger and worries, while some authors define social security as being the measures taken to guarantee safety of a country, person, things and value. People need to be assured of safety and security to be able to enjoy life's pleasure without being attacked, keeping valuables without fearing that they may be stolen and so on. Should the people feel unsafe and insecure to enjoy these, they are bound to complain about the ineffectiveness of their own police. Further more, the type of security measure to be employed in any neighbourhood would depend to a greater extent on the proportion of income that the local authority and the individual members of the society are willing to invest into security matter. This paper generally aimed at assessing the spatial distribution of police station/post, their staff strength, the local vigilante groups and the neighbourhood securities. Conclusively, the study finds out that the ratio of the Nigerian police force to the general public is one police man to two hundred and ninety three people(1:293) which is far better than what is obtainable in countries like Canada, Britain and South Africa with about one police man to 400 people although with better services. And that many neighbourhoods in Minna are comparatively safer to live in than other urban centres in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: Crime, Neighbourhoods, Police Station, Security And Spatial-Distribution

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I. INTRODUCTION

Crime generally takes an enormous physical, financial and emotional toll on its victims, while "Victims" according to UNCCPCJ (1996), are defined as persons who, individually or collectively, have suffered harm, including physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights, through acts or omissions that are violations of national criminal laws or of internationally recognized norms relating to human rights. The experiences of many countries around the world have shown that one effective way to address the many needs of crime victims is to establish programmes that effectively help victims within criminal justice and social institutions. These may include police and other law enforcement personnel, prosecutors, legal and other victim advocates, judges, correctional personnel, health and mental health providers, social workers, ombudsmen, spiritual leaders, civil organizations, traditional leaders, human rights commissions, legislators and elected representatives, and others.

Many systems do not allow the victim to present his or her civil claim in conjunction with criminal proceedings. Even if the offender is convicted, the sanctions (often a fine, probation or imprisonment) have little relevance to the victim, other than affording the satisfaction of seeing the offender punished. Policing is a blame oriented profession" says Kizito Mhlakaza,(Deputy Commissioner of operations, Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS)). This is not surprising given the nature of the service that they provide to society, but the fact remains that their physical presence in any locality act as a check on criminals and therefore stem down greatly the frequent occurrences of crime related activities. Therefore, it is very rational to call on the government to evenly locate the police station/post in all the neighbourhoods in order to give the impression of safety to community at large.

This study is aimed at assessing the level of security in each of the neighbourhoods in Minna and their access to the service of the police force with the hope of proposing a more functional and effective policing in Minna. And this is carried out through the following objectives:

- Assess and map out the spatial distribution of the police station/post within the town;
- assess the labour force of the existing police station/post;
- examine the population density of those neighbourhoods and crime level;
- proffer planning solution to the problem identified.

II. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH OF THE STUDY.

The whole town of Minna was divided into 24 neighbourhood areas according to their geographical location and socio-economic status. This then serves as the basis for the administration of 2400 questionnaires using systematic random sampling in each of the neighbourhoods. One hundred house-hold heads was used as the sample size in each of the neighbourhood who also served as the targeted population of the study.



Figure 1 Area commanders office, Bosso road.
Source: Researchers field survey (2006).



Figure 2. GRA police station, Bosso Minna. Source:
Researchers field survey (2006).

Oral interview were carried out in each of the existing police stations/posts with the officers delegated to offer such services who also made available some relevant secondary data on their stations. Figure 1 and 2 are some of the police stations visited for the study. The ward heads (Ma-angwa) were also interviewed on the level of security and the activities of their local vigilante outfits. Secondary data acquired include the street guide map of the town, the police force periodicals, and other internet materials.

2.1. The review of the Nigeria's Police reforms and the criminal justice system

Prior to the onset of colonization by the British in 1861, traditional African policing methods were rooted in the community and closely interlinked with social and religious structures. The enforcement of traditional customs and beliefs was carried out by community structures such as age grades (formal organizations whose membership is based on pre-determined age range), secret societies or vocational guilds (for example, of hunters, farmers or fishermen). In 1930, the northern and southern police forces merged into the first national police force -- the Nigerian Police Force -- headed by an Inspector General of Police. The following years saw further changes in the organization of the force, such as the introduction of regional commands to reflect the federalism of Nigeria. The transition from military rule in 1999 marked the first real efforts or opportunity to undertake reform of the Nigerian Police Force. The Police Affairs Minister in the year 2000 stated that "The image of the new police this administration wants to build is that of a courteous, polite, well disciplined and well behaved police officer and men who are truly friends of the people." The reform efforts intensified during the tenure of the immediate past Inspector General of Police Tafa Balogun, but they were accompanied by an increasingly belligerent policing strategy. On his appointment to the post in 2002, Tafa Balogun announced an eight-point plan aimed primarily at combating rising crime and the resultant insecurity felt across Nigeria, particularly in urban centers. The central pillar of his anti-crime strategy was the introduction of "Operation Fire-for-Fire," which, while outlining a policy that was technically within officers' right to act in self-defense, raised concerns that the police would take it as an invitation to engage in disproportionate use of force. To address the continued shortage of personnel, a campaign was launched to recruit 40,000 new officers per year.

The Nigerian police force size currently stands at approximately 325,000 officers, while the country's population is roughly 130 million people; this is a ratio of one officer to every 400 Nigerians. This compares with similar ratios in South Africa and the United Kingdom. Serving alongside the regular police force are the Mobile Police, which are specially trained anti-riot unit, numbering approximately 30,000 officers known

locally as MOPOL, they were originally created to curtail civil disturbance or large-scale conflict but today are also deployed to carry out various other policing duties. But in January 2005, Tafa Balogun was replaced by another officer by name; Sunday Ehindero due to corruption. Nigerian Police Force is governed by the colonial law, which has seen no comprehensive review since its initial promulgation in 1943.

The Nigeria Police Act of 1998, which laid the groundwork for the current police reform process, state the duties of police officers as (a) to preserve peace and maintain law and order; (b) to prevent all offences against persons or property; (c) to detect offences, apprehend offenders and bring them to justice. According to the 1999 constitution, the police were assisted in their public function through the establishment of the Police Complaints Authority, the Police Directorate, Police Inspectorate as well as numerous other civil society oversight and assistance groupings. To compare Nigerians' police situation with other countries of the world, a close look at the work of Marzolini, a survey by Pollara reveals that Canada has 25% fewer police per capital than the United States and 23% fewer than Britain. The survey further reveals that there are approximately 60,000 police officers in Canada and that Canadians clearly value the police in their neighbourhoods. Also an overwhelming majority of Canadians (94 percent) feel completely safe from crime although almost half the population believe there are too few police patrolling their neighbourhoods. And over 78 percent of Canadians feel comfortable walking alone after dark, while 95 percent feel safe in their homes at night.

III. NEIGHBOURHOOD WATCH VIGILANTE

Neighbourhood watch is based on the concept of co-operation, and statistics proves that it works when citizens take positive steps to secure their own property and neighbours learn how to report suspicious activities around their homes. Particularly crime involving residential neighbourhood is a responsibility that must be shared equally by police service and private citizen. The fact is, the impact on crime prevention by police service alone is minimal when compared with the power of private citizen working with the police service. Vigilantes as defined by the BBC English dictionary are people who organize themselves into an unofficial group to protect their community and to catch and punish criminals. Jenny F. (2005) viewed neighbourhood watch as a response to shifting attitudes about the role of police in the community and as a movement to have more community involvement in crime prevention. Similar schemes in the United States are referred to as "Block watch", "Apartment watch", "Home watch" and "Community watch", which are collective attempt by the police and community to reduce crime. Through this scheme, the police have encouraged community to take responsibility for crime prevention, control of social and physical disorder in their neighborhoods. Shaka (2005) observed that vigilante groups are alternative way of crime prevention in Nigeria. These vigilante groups were formed in response to request from various groups in Nigeria for crime prevention motives. The law enforcement agency in Nigeria was seen not to be doing enough in the protection of life and property both within the urban and the rural areas. The BBC English dictionary defines security as all the precautions that are taken to protect a place; or "a legal protection against possible harm or loss". While Kaldor (2004) sees security as a precautionary measure which does not only encourage infrastructural development but also discourages criminality.

The government of Nigeria seems to be paying lip-service to the issue of general security in the way the existing police stations are being kept; not to talk of creating new ones. It should be realized that any member of a community may become a victim and that most crimes contribute to the victimization of other community members and the deterioration of community and societal harmony. At the time of a crime, or upon discovering that a crime has occurred, victims are likely to experience a number of physical reactions to the event. These may include an increase in heart beat rate, a feeling of being frozen or dryness of the mouth. Some of these physical reactions may not occur until after the danger has passed. They may recur at a later stage when the memory of the crime returns. After the crime, victims may suffer a range of physical effects, including insomnia, appetite disturbance, lethargy, headaches, muscle tension, nausea and decreased libido. Such reactions may persist for some time after the crime has occurred. Financially, the impact of crime on the victims may include some or all of the following:

- Repairing property or replacing possessions,
- Installing security measures,
- Accessing health services,
- Participating in the criminal justice process, for example, attending the trial,
- Taking time off work or from other income-generating activities,
- Funeral or burial expenses.

In some cases, victims may feel a need to move, a process likely to entail financial costs. As a result of the crime, the value of property may decrease. In the long term, crime can adversely impact the victim's employment. Also the victim may find it impossible to return to work or their work performance may be adversely affected, resulting in demotion, loss of pay and possibly dismissal. While this is to be expected in connection with offences such as murder, torture and rape, the crimes of assault, robbery and burglary can also leave lasting feelings of powerlessness, insecurity, anger and fear. Not only individuals but also communities and organizations can be victimized, leading to their deterioration over time as confidence ebbs, fear increases and the economic burden of victimization becomes insupportable. According to (UNCCPCJ, 1996), the effects of victimization strike particularly hard at the poor, the powerless, the disabled and the socially isolated. Research shows that those already affected by prior victimization are particularly susceptible to subsequent victimization by the same or other forms of crime.

IV. THE STUDY AREA.

Minna is basically a Gwari town but as a state capital, other tribes tend to dominate them particularly the Nupes. Geographically, the town lies on latitude 9.380 N and Longitude 6.330 East, and is about 135 km south-west away from the Abuja Federal Capital Territory. In term of built-up area, the area coverage increased from 884 hectares in 1979 to 5336 hectares in 1983 and to 7070 hectares in 1993 but from the analysis of Landsat (TM) imagery of 2001, the built up areas has expanded to about 10142 hectares. The growth phenomenal of Minna after its choice as a state capital can be seen in the difference between its built-up area in 1979 (three years after its choice as a capital) and 1983 (seven years after) (Sanusi, 2006). In 1979, the population of Minna was estimated as 76 480, but according to the 1991 census figure, Minna has a total population of one hundred and forty three thousand eight hundred and ninety six (143,896) people out of which seventy eight thousand one hundred and fifty three (78,153) are male, sixty five thousand seven hundred and (65,743) are females. With an annual growth rate of 7.9%, the population of Minna between 1979 and 1991 multiplied by about two and a half times. The 7.9% growth rate within this period is well above the national population growth rate of 2.83% given by the National Population Census of 1991. The population estimated for 2007 is about 304,113 after the 2006 national census which is not unconnected to its closeness to the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja and the relative peace in the town after the Kaduna and Jos political bedlam that forced many to relocate to places like Minna.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Minna metropolis has spatial area coverage of about 10142 Hectares as mapped out from the town's Spot satellite image of 2001 with an estimated population of about 417882. Table 2 and Fig. 3 gives us the general summary of the level of effectiveness of the police force in protecting the life and property of the people of Minna. Bosso police station with four neighbourhoods and other villages under its jurisdiction and with a population of about 59,924 within those neighbourhoods has only one police station, one police post with only 214 staffs. This means that one police officer is supposed to take charge of about 280 people which is practically impossible for any man. In the case of Chanchaga police division; there is one police station, two police posts with 224 staffs to over see two neighbourhoods and the neighbouring villages with a total population of about 29,250. One police man in this division is supposed to be in charge of about 131people.

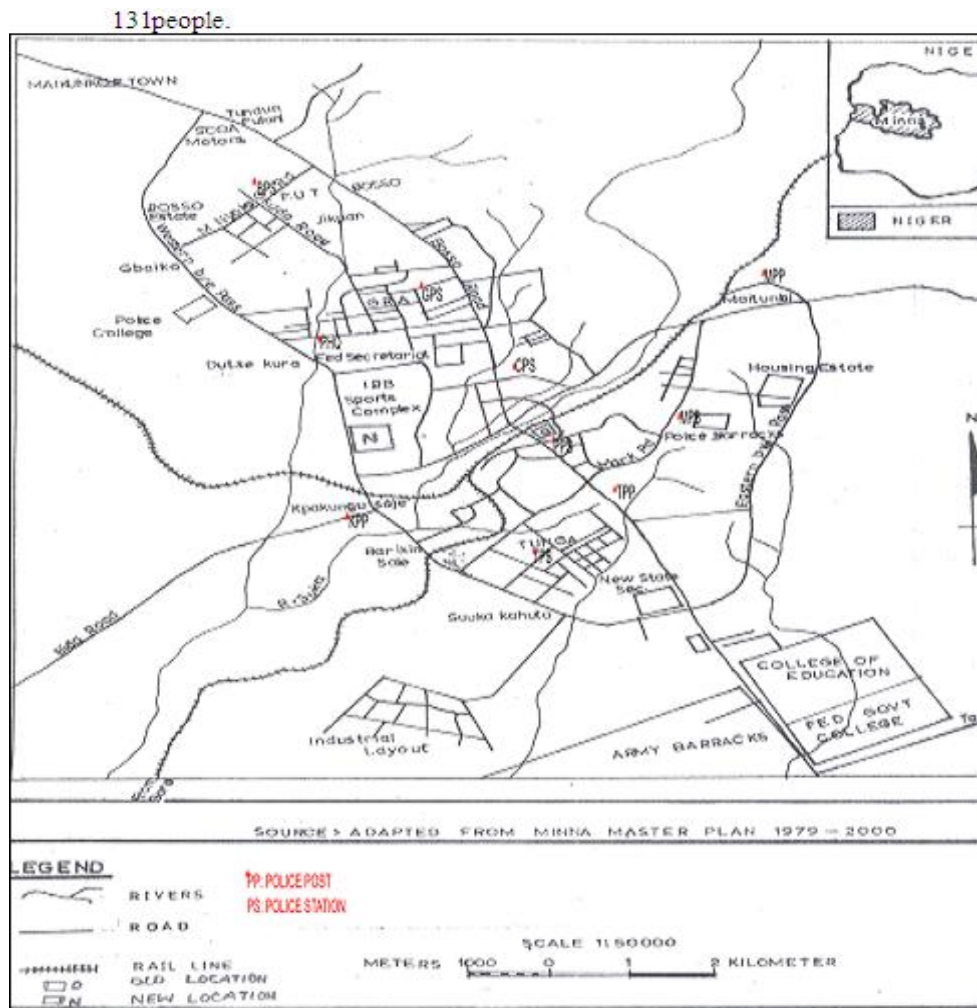


Figure 3. Police station/post locations and distribution in Minna town

Table 2. Police divisional area-population coverage in Minna metropolise.

POLICE DIVISIONS	POPULATION SIZE (2006)	AREA COVERAGE I HECTARES	NUMBER OF POLICE STATIONS/POST/STAFF
Bosso Division	59924	1685	1 / 1 / 214
Chanchaga division	29250	2922	1 / 2 / 224
Police HQ	22420	345	1 / 0 / 235
A-Division, central	160664	1846	1 / 4 / 203
B-Division, Paiko rd	88092	889	1 / 1 / 284
Tudun Wada division	57532	2078	1 / 1 / 226
	3417882	310142	36 / 9 / 1426

Source: Author's field survey, (2006).

The A-Division (central police station) is made up of one police station, four police post and 203 staff strength. This division is in charge of eight (8) neighbourhoods with a population of about 160,664 in the ratio of one police man to seven hundred and ninety two (792) people. This is very challenging and unhealthy for an urban environment that is highly dynamic. At the Minna central, B-Division (Paiko police station) is in charge of three neighbourhoods with a population of about 88,092 people and staff strength of about 284, in the ratio one police man to 310 people. On the average for the whole town, there are only six police stations, nine police post over a total land area of about 10,142 hectares with staff strength of about 1426 police men for the whole

town and neighbouring villages. That is, one police man to two hundred and ninety three (293) people which is comparatively encouraging but with some elements of spatial modification and decentralization of operation for a polarized urban environment like Minna.

Table 3 Spatial cover ages of each police man in Minna

S/N	Police divisions	Coverage per each police man in hectares
1	Bosso	7.87
2	Chanchaga	13.05
3	Police HQ	6.81
4	Central police	9.09
5	Paiko rd	3.13
6	Tudun wada	9.20

Source: Author’s field survey, 2006.

Table 4 Neighbourhoods without police station/post

S/N	Neighbourhoods	Population Size
1	Bosso town	39163
2	Jipan	8602
3	Tayi village	9675
4	Fadipe	4485
5	Sauka kahuta	3077
6	Barkinsale	5738

Source: Author’s field survey, 2006

In Table 3, the area coverage of each police division or the areas each police men is expected to cover in each division is relatively large. For example, a police man in a neighbourhood like chanchaga is expected to police about 131 people over 13.05 hectares of land. Paiko road police station (B-division) has a better service condition in term of coverage, but whether by coincidence or planned, this area is more of administrative and commercial land uses with major banks surrounding it. In fact, Table 4 shows the number of some neighbourhoods without a police station/post within them. And this is why robbery and vandalization of properties is rampant in those places, because house around the police stations; even without fences experience little or no robbery disturbances. Hence the need for an urgent planning approach to the location and relocation of police stations/post in Minna and in many other Nigerian’s urban centre.

VI. CONCLUSION

Security services are an indispensable social service that must be rendered by any responsible government because it is one of the major factors that determine the level of developmental activities in any community. This study reveals that Minna is relatively well served with police personnel, but there is poor surveillance in most of the neighbourhoods.

VII. RECOMMENDATION

The government should build more befitting police station/post within the town on neighbourhood threshold population basis. The police public relation unit should be invigorated in order to enlighten the public on how best to identify and report criminal activities. The local vigilante (yan-baga) group should be re-orientated and equipped with reasonable security outfit to face the present challenge.

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Table 1 Minna neighbourhood population size, area coverage and the number of police station/post

S/N	Neighbourhoods	Population size (2006)	Area coverage in Hectares	Number of police stations/post/staff
1	Bosso Estate	1733	753	Bosso Division
2	Tudun Fulani	10426	369	
3	Bosso Town	39163	469	
4	Jikpan	8602	94	1 / 1 / 214
5	Sango	2984	1036	Chanchaga division
6	Chanchaga	26266	1886	
7	Dutse Kura Gwari	8969	147	Police HQ
8	Dutse nkura Huasa	13451	198	1/ 0 / 235
9	Agwan Daji	14784	99	A-Division, central 1 / 4 / 203
10	F-layout	4811	117	
11	Tayi village	9675	174	
12	Limawa A	27112	144	
13	Maitumbi	13860	483	
14	Makera	26716	336	
15	Nasarawa	30196	134	
16	Sabo ngari	33510	359	B-Division, Paiko rd
17	Minna Central	26208	204	
18	Kpakungu	17399	440	
19	Fadipe	44485	245	1 / 1 / 284
20	Sauka Kahuta	3077	794	Tudun Wada division 1 / 1 / 226
21	Barkin sale	5738	168	
22	Tudun wada north	23376	672	
23	Tudun wada south	21106	360	
24	Tunga low cost	4235	84	
Grand total		417882	10142	6 / 9 / 1426

Source: projection from the 1991 national population census and field survey.