

TRAJECTORIES, TYPOLOGY AND IMPLICATIONS OF KIDNAPPING IN NIGERIA.

MUHAMMAD RIBADU AYUBA

**Department of Sociology,
Faculty of Social Sciences,
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.**

Email: ribadoayuba@gmail.com

mrayuba@abu.edu.ng

Tel: +2348036557188

Abstract

Kidnapping is one of the major security challenges facing Nigerians in recent time. Though it is not entirely a new phenomenon, yet, like a wild fire, it has continued to grow and assume horrendous dimensions. Some decades ago, kidnapping in Nigeria used to be regarded as a thing peculiar to some specific parts of the country, particularly the Niger Delta region which made news headlines due to the activities of the militants. However, today hardly there is a part of the country that is not faced with the threat of kidnapping thereby making it one of the most pervasive organised crimes in Nigeria. This is evident in series of kidnapping cases being reported which transcend social and spatial barriers across the country. Thus, relying on secondary sources of data, this study interrogated the existing literature to examine the trajectories, typology and implications of kidnapping on national development. The Queer Ladder Theory was adopted as theoretical framework for the study. Findings in the literature indicated harsh socioeconomic conditions occasioned by poor governance which breeds frustration, depression and aggression as some of the drivers of kidnapping. Based on the findings of the study, therefore, the study recommended creation of jobs by the three tiers of government, particularly at local government level which is closer to the people as a panacea to the menace of kidnapping in Nigeria.

Keywords: Kidnapping, Trajectory, Typology, Queer Ladder Theory, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

It is understatement to describe kidnapping as a monstrous criminal activity that has bedeviled Nigeria as a nation. Even though the current trends of the crime could be regarded as relatively new, the horrendous dimensions it takes in different parts of the country is quite worrisome. A recent global study of top 10 kidnap for ransom risk countries ranked Nigeria second riskiest country in the world (Constellis, 2017). It has, thus, become a regular incidence which inundates both print and online media outlets so much that it is no longer shocking to break news about kidnapping in the country.

Initially, kidnapping activities in Nigeria used to be regarded as a thing of a particular militant groups in the Nigeria's oil rich Niger Delta where expatriates and wealthy local public and private individuals were being targeted by the kidnapers. However, recent incidents have revealed a remarkable change in the patterns and spatial spread of its occurrence as several other regions of the country continue to experience the upsurge of kidnapping activities in unequal proportions. As a matter of fact, it only takes one to look or feed well and have access to some resources, however little, to be a potential kidnap victim in Nigeria today.

Moreover, even regions with almost a near zero incidents of kidnapping some few decades ago such as the northern region, have become hotspots of kidnapping in Nigeria, with the northwest states of Kaduna, Katsina and Zamfara, being the most hit (Godwin, 2019). Thus, several documented cases of high-net-worth kidnappings across the region abound. Some of these include the notorious kidnapping of the former Comptroller-General of the Nigeria Customs Service and the current District head of Daura emirate, the president's home town, Alhaji Musa Uba. The in-law to the sitting president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria was held in captivity for sixty days before his eventual release by his kidnappers after a payment of an undisclosed ransom (Bello, 2019). Few days after the incident, a minor – 16 year old boy, was also kidnapped but regained freedom four days later after a payment of three hundred thousand naira out of the initial five hundred thousand naira demanded by the kidnappers (Bello, 2019).

Although the security operatives claim to have recorded some successes in terms of arrests of some of the kingpin kidnappers across the country, the monstrous crime has seemingly continued to grow unabated. It has become more worrisome considering its trends and type of suspects being paraded as perpetrators of the crime. A case in point is the arrest of a gang of kidnappers made up of young teenagers, the oldest of whom was 19 years in Kano metropolis. These teenage kidnappers abducted, drugged and eventually killed a primary school pupil in the metropolis (Gyamfi, Ogugbuaja, and Nzeagwu, 2019). This, among other kidnapping incidents, speaks volume about the gruesome nature as well as the new dimensions of the phenomenon in Nigeria. This study, therefore, attempts to examine the historical trajectories and various types or dimensions of kidnapping activities in Nigeria with the aim of making some laudable policy recommendations to address the phenomenon.

2. Theoretical Framework

The theory adopted in this work is the Queer Ladder Theory (QLT) to provide cogent explanations of kidnapping as a social phenomenon. Daniel Bell (1919) was an American sociologist who attempts to explain the fundamental nature of organised crimes as a way of acquiring material resources and climbing higher social status (Okoli and Agada, 2014). The QLT, therefore, basically assumes that organised crime is a deliberate behaviour that is targeted at achieving a specific goal. It also assumes that organised crime can be regarded as a conduit for attaining higher social status (social climbing) and/or a means of acquiring economic power. The last assumption of QLT indicates that organised crime is a means of wealth generation and power acquisition (Odoma and Akor, 2019; Okoli and Agada, 2014). The assumptions of the QLT holds true particularly in societies where government's capacity to detect and ensure punitive measures against criminals is weak; where there is no equal access to basic means of livelihood; where chances of upward social mobility among the masses are too slim due to structural inefficiencies.

By application, therefore, the QLT explains the phenomenon of kidnapping as a form of organised crime in Nigeria because it is crystal clear that the governments of the country over the years have proven to lack the political will to address the phenomena of organised crimes such as kidnapping. Kidnapping has been largely promoted in the country due to widespread socioeconomic melancholy and attendant livelihood crisis. In other words, kidnapping has been incentivised through the indolence of relevant government agencies to ensure

appropriate punitive measures against the criminals thereby making the chances of success (acquisition of economic gains) and escaping justice higher than its risks or costs. Also, the theory points to the fact that kidnapping thrives in Nigeria due to the criminal quest for material gains particularly among the teeming unemployed youths who have mostly lost hope in making a living through a socially approved means let alone rising on the social mobility ladder. Similarly, the manner in which political appointments and chieftaincy titles are offered to the highest bidder makes the criminals also want to get rich quickly through kidnapping which afford them the opportunity to become rich over night.

3. Methodology

This study basically interrogated the existing literature using secondary data which include, but not limited to, academic journal articles, newspaper reports, bulletins, e-books among others

4.0 Literature Review

This section consists of a review of relevant literature on the trajectories and typology of kidnapping as well as their implications for national development.

4.1 Trajectories of Kidnappings in Nigeria

The root of the word kidnapping is believed to have derived from two words namely: 'kid' (infant) and 'napping' (to be caught sleeping). Tzanelli (2009) narrated that the act of kidnapping originated in the 17th century Great Britain when infants of the wealthy families would be caught sleeping for ransom hence the term 'kid' 'napping'. Thus, there is a sort of consensus among researchers that the concept of kidnapping first emerged as an act of child abduction or stealing. Over time, it evolved to assume other forms and dimensions. One of the earliest notorious global cases of kidnapping involved the well-publicised 1874's abduction of a four year old boy in Pennsylvania (Okoli and Agada, 2014). Since then several other cases of kidnapping have been witnessed in varying degrees and in different dimensions across the developed and developing countries including Nigeria.

One of the earliest well-publicised cases of kidnapping in Nigeria was allegedly by the military government headed by Major General Muhammadu Buhari in 1983. The victim, Umaru Dikko, was alleged to have stolen public funds to the tune of 1bn USD while he served as a minister of transportation in the first democratically elected government of Nigeria led by Alhaji Shehu Shagari. His foiled kidnap was allegedly arranged in order to repatriate him and force him cough out the public funds he was accused of embezzling (Alex, 2012).

However, Nigerians became conscious of the acts of kidnapping with the advent of the struggle of the Niger Delta militants from 1990s, whose initial motive was to draw the attention of government and even the international community to their plights as a result of the oil exploration activities occurring in their communities. To achieve this, they engaged in random abductions of the expatriate oil workers in the region. They would keep the victims in captivity and demand huge ransom for their as a condition for their release. The magnitude of these abductions was so high that, according to Ibrahim and Mukhtar (2017), it drew global attention particularly from countries of origin of the victims as they made headlines in almost all local and some international media. It was estimated that between 2007 and 2009 alone

over two hundred foreign nationals were kidnapped in the Niger Delta region (Philip, c, 2009). Thus, the Niger Delta is known for its notorious gangs of kidnapers who posed as freedom fighters agitating for the emancipation of their region from the chains of poverty occasioned by environmental degradation caused by oil spillage. Efforts of arresting the situation by the federal government (FG) at different times yielded little or no results as the kidnapers continued to succeed in capturing their targets – mostly foreign nationals. This was manifested in the arrest of one of the notorious leaders of the Niger Delta militants – Mujahid Asari Dokubo by the FG. The militants confronted the FG by kidnapping nine expatriates of different countries and demanded nothing but the release of their leader as a trade-off (Chidi, Rose and Uche, 2015).

Thus, throughout the 1990s the militants operated and recorded some degree of successes. Moreover, with the formation of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) they simply got stronger and more terrifying. In 2003, the militants were reported to have kidnapped 270 persons, 97 of whom were expatriates (Ogbuehi, 2018). Subsequent years equally witnessed a rise in kidnapping incidents in the region with the foreign nationals being the main targets. Even though kidnapping in Nigeria started in the Niger Delta, it has now spread to other parts of the country. In fact it has become a national disaster that occurs in every nook and cranny of the country almost on daily basis.

Since the activities of the Boko Haram in northern Nigeria took a horrendous dimension, several kidnapping incidents have been reported in the region. One of the earliest notorious kidnapping incidents was the Chibok girls' abduction of Borno state in April 2014 by the Boko Haram terrorists. By June of the same year another 20 women and sixty female including children were reportedly kidnapped by the Boko Haram in Borno state (CNN Library, 2018). By 2017, soon after the release of 100 abducted Chibok girls, another 113 girls were kidnapped by the terrorists in Dapchi, Yobe state, northeast Nigeria. On the whole, it is estimated that over 1000 children have been kidnapped in northeast Nigeria since 2013 (Busari, 2018).

While the kidnap rate in the northeast is largely characterised by the terrorist activities of Boko Haram, the kidnappings in the northwest and the north central geopolitical zones are predominantly attributed to the activities of the bandits, Fulani herdsmen and other communal violence. Reported incidents of kidnapping in the local media from January 2018 to September 2018 shows Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara, Rivers and Akwa Ibom as states with the highest number of kidnapping cases. According to the Nigeria's Inspector-General of Police the northwest Nigeria recorded the highest kidnap rate with a total of 365 persons kidnapped in the first quarter of 2019. Thus, Zamfara state, being the hotspot, has the highest national kidnap rate with 281 victims; while Kogi and Niger followed with 65 and 51 respectively (Godwin, 2019). Since 2016 kidnapping cases in the northwest and north central attributed to the Fulani herdsmen and bandits have skyrocketed.

However, it is pertinent to mention that spatial boundaries are not determinants of the origin of the perpetrators as the criminals travel across other localities to commit the crime as in the reported case of Murtala Umaru who, when arrested, revealed his role in multiple kidnap cases in Edo state axis, south-south Nigeria. The suspect, who was of Fulani extraction, admitted making over N100 million ransom which he extorted from his victims (Johnson,

2018). Similarly, in 2017, four suspected Fulani herdsmen were arrested for kidnapping another herdsman's wife and demanding N200,000 ransom (Akingboye, 2017). Earlier in the same year, a gang of kidnapers also kidnapped a 22 year old woman; kept her in their den and raped her for good three days (Ojo, 2017). In 2018, two Americans and two Canadians had also been kidnapped in an ambush in Kaduna state. The expatriates were abducted at the expense of two policemen attached to them as their escorts (Adebayo, 2018). However, the police claimed to have rescued them without payment of any ransom. A month later, two German archaeologists from the Goethe University in Frankfurt were also abducted from an excavation site in Kaduna state and got their freedom (Laessing, 2018) only after payment of ransom to their abductors. Still in 2018, three wives of one famous businessman, Adamu Nakwana, were kidnapped by suspected bandits in Birnin Gwari local government area of Kaduna state demanding ransom (Ogbuehi, 2018).

Recent kidnappings of security personnel in different parts of the country are the new dimensions of the phenomenon. Both serving and retired military and police officers have been reportedly kidnapped in one location or another. In 2017, for instance, two military personnel in Delta state were kidnapped in broad day light. It took the intervention of the Operation Delta Safe to secure the release of the personnel. Also, in 2017 a retired police divisional officer in Edo state was kidnapped and a ransom of N25 million demanded from his son to regain his freedom. In 2018, four police officers were kidnapped and their operational van set ablaze by suspected herdsmen in Benue state (Godwin, 2019). Similarly, in August 2019 a Divisional Police Officer (D.P.O) Mr. Okoro was kidnapped along the Benin-Asaba-Onitsha Expressway and was released only upon the payment of N3 million ransom (Matthew, 2019). Earlier in May 2019 two officials of the Federal Road Safety Commission (FRSC) were kidnapped in Osun State. Their abductors demanded N1 million ransom before they were eventually freed (Matthew, 2019). Perhaps the most recent kidnapping incident involving the security personnel in Nigeria is that of Musa Rabo, an Assistant Commissioner of Police who was easily kidnapped on his way to Jos on October 19, 2019 (Tauna, 2019). His kidnapers demanded N50 million ransom but the Nigeria Police Force on its twitter handle declared that it was able to secure his release unhurt without payment of any ransom. These incidents have demoralising effects on the psyche of the general public as the people who are empowered by law to protect them have also become vulnerable to the kidnapers' attacks. Thus, with the official statistics estimating an average of 1000 kidnapping cases per year, everyone residing or working in Nigeria is a potential victim or target of the kidnapers irrespective of their nationality or socioeconomic status (Ibrahim and Mukhtar, 2017).

4.2 Highlights of Some Reported Kidnapping Incidents in Nigeria

The phenomenon of kidnapping has taken a horrendous dimension in Nigeria. Over the years, the country has experienced different forms of kidnapping and in different locations. Some decades ago, kidnapping was regarded as a modus operandi for the Niger Delta militants who struggled for the emancipation of their region by forming various militant organisations. However, recent occurrences reveal a new trend of kidnapping transcending socio-geographic boundaries in the country. While the Boko Haram insurgents held sway in the north east, the criminal Fulani elements have maintained the lead as the most terrifying criminal groups in the North West. Thus, in this section, a timeline of kidnapping incidents in

Nigeria from 2011 to 2019 has been reviewed. Table 1 below shows a timeline of some reported kidnapping incidents in Nigeria:

Table 1: Timeline of Reported Kidnapping Incidents in Nigeria

S/N	Victim	Year	Place	Ransom demanded/p aid	Released/ killed
1	Mr. Ohunyom Ernest	2011	Lagos	N85 Million	Released
2	Mr. Ojukwu Cosmas	2012	Lagos	\$1Million	Released
3	Mr. Mbarikatta Williams Uboma	2012	Lagos	N20 million	Released
4	Mohammed Jamal (Labanese)	2012	Lagos	N17 million	Released
5	Mr Leo Abraham	2012	Lagos	N15Million	Released
6	Mr. Paul Cole	2012	Lagos	N20 Million	Released
7	Mr. Kingsley Nwokenta	2012	Lagos	N15 Million	Released
8	Mr. Anthony Ozoanidobi	2012	Lagos	N15 Million	Released
9	Mr. Tom	2012	Benin	N100 Million	Released
10	Owner of Kings Paint	2012	Benin	N40 million	Released
11	Mr. Randaki	2012	Benin	N30 million	Released
12	Mr. Dan Odiete	2013	Benin	N100 million	Released
13	Owner of Uyi Technical	2013	Benin	N100 million	Released
14	Elias Ukachukwu	2015	Lagos	\$1 Million	Released
15	Chief Raymond Okoye	2015	Lagos	\$1 Million	Released
16	Mr.Uche Okafor	2015	Lagos	\$1 Million	Released
17	Mr. James Udoji	2016	Lagos	\$1 Million	Released
18	Mr. Francis Umeh	2016	Lagos	\$1 Million	Released
19	Col. Samaila Inusa	2016	Kaduna	Unknown	Killed
20	Rev. Fr. John Adeyi	2016	Benue	Unknown	Killed
21	Margaret Emefiele	2016	Delta	N1.5 Billion	Released
22	Mr & Mrs Pius Mallam	2016	Kaduna	Unknown	Released
23	Amb. Bagudu Hirse	2016	Kaduna	Unknown	Released
24	Isa Achuja (HRM)	2017	Kogi	N20 Million	Released
25	Mr. Donatus Duru	2017	Lagos	N150 Million	Released
26	2 German Archaeologists	2017	Kaduna	Unknown	Released
27	Oba Joel Daodu	2017	Ondo	N15 Million	Released
28	2 military officers	2017	Delta	Unknown	Rescued
29	A retired DPO	2017	Edo	25 million	Released
30	A wife of a Fulani herdsman	2017	Ondo	200,000	Released
31	2 Americans and 2 Canadians	2018	Kaduna	Unknown	Released
32	3 wives of a business mogul Adamu Nakwana	2018	Kaduna	Unknown	Released
33	A Divisional Police Officer	2019	Edo	3 million	Released
34	2 officials of FRSC	2019	Osun	1 million	Released
35	ACP Musa Rabo	2019	Kaduna	50 million	Rescued
36	Musa Uba, Ex CG of Nigeria Custom	2019	Daura	Unknown	Rescued

Source: Adapted from Odoma and Akor (2019) and modified by the author

Even though table 1 above is not exhaustive, yet it can be deduced that the incidents of kidnapping have become so prevalent in Nigeria, and tend to affect different categories of people by transcending geographic boundaries or demarcations.

4.3 Typology of Kidnapping

For proper understanding of the act of kidnapping, Okoli and Agada (2014) identified three elements that need to be taken into account: (i) taking one away against their consent; (ii) keeping one in false imprisonment or illegal confinement; and (iii) extortion of ransom from the victim. Thus, several types and classifications of kidnapping have been made and discussed by different researchers in the literature. Some of these researchers include Turner (1998), Pharaoh (2005), Mohammed (2008), Eze and Ezeibe (2012), Ottuh and Aitufe (2014), Okoli and Agada (2014) among others. Zannoni (2003) broadly categorised kidnapping into three (3): a) Criminal kidnapping: This according to Zannoni (2003) is a kidnapping motivated by the quest to obtain ransom from the victim's family, business or associates; b) Political kidnapping: this type of kidnapping is informed by the desire to advance a political course often through the use of sophisticated weapons. Militant and terrorist activities fall under this category; and c) Pathological kidnapping: also known as emotional kidnapping (Zannoni, 2003). It is a type of kidnapping where the motive is to inflict psychological pains on the victim. Examples of this include rape, child abduction by separated parents among others.

The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC, 2003) officially classified kidnapping into: kidnapping for ransom, kidnapping between or within criminal groups, kidnapping for sexual exploitation, kidnapping linked to family or spouse disputes, revenge kidnapping, political kidnapping and ideological kidnapping. However, the kidnapping for ransom seem to be the most common in Nigeria where wealthy people are being abducted in exchange for money. Similarly, the Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC, 2019) identified kidnap for ransom as one of five (5) basic types of kidnapping. According to OSAC (2019) kidnap for ransom is a major strategy used by kidnapers to source for funds with which to run their illicit operations. It is regarded as the oldest and the most popular form of kidnapping which entails taking hostage in order to extract some money from their relatives or business associates. Thus, in developing countries like Nigeria, expatriates and wealthy individuals constitute the larger group of the victims of this type of kidnapping. Several cases involving foreigners in the country abound. For instance, in 2015, an American missionary was abducted in south of Abuja and a ransom worth \$300,000 demanded for her release.

Another type of kidnapping identified by the OSAC (2019) is tiger kidnapping or proxy bombings. It is a form of kidnapping in which ransom is not sought; rather the victim is forced into doing a specific action for the criminals like coercing a banker to disclose the password of the vault of the bank in order to steal from it. Sometimes, the victim could be kidnapped and coerced to plant an explosive in a target (proxy bombing) which is very common among militant groups through guerrilla warfare. The tiger kidnapping is common in western and Asian countries. Express kidnapping is the third type of kidnapping and which is most common in several parts of Africa and Latin America. It is, according to the OSAC (2019), a kidnapping that involves only the perpetrator and the victim where the victim is threatened by the criminal through the use of weapon or other dreadful means usually to coerce them to make ATM withdrawals of maximum daily amount of cash. In some instances the victim is

held hostage to pass the night with the criminals, particularly when the victim exceeds the daily maximum limit of withdrawals. Express kidnappers use different strategies or forms to execute their evil intentions. Apart from using weapon to physically constrict the victim and get him/her do what they want, the express kidnappers sometimes pose as taxi drivers or even police officers in order to fool their unsuspecting victim. For instance, the Crimes and Safety Report for South Africa in 2016 identified express kidnappings by kidnappers posing as police officers around the country's airports as a major security threat facing travellers into the country. The kidnappers, dressed in police uniforms would mount a checkpoint and stop the unsuspecting victim to either rob him/her or abduct them for an express kidnapping. In most cases, the victims of express kidnapping are eventually released unharmed especially if the victims cooperated well with his/her captors. This type of kidnapping has led to the innovation of ride-share applications in numerous countries such as Nigeria. For instance, the introduction of Uber in Nigeria is partly seen as a laudable initiative which helps to curb the menace of express kidnapping in the country. However, the ride-share system too is being penetrated to perpetrate express kidnapping by the criminals as evidently shown in South Africa in 2017 when a couple was attacked and forced to withdraw money from an ATM by a criminal who posed as a rideshare driver.

The fourth type of kidnapping identified by OSAC (2019) is political and ideological kidnapping. This is a kidnapping that is politically and/or ideologically motivated. Here, the victims of kidnapping are held hostage by their abductors to swap for their members who are being held by government as prisoners. Thus, the victims are deemed to have some sort of kidnap ransom value; ransom value in the sense that they are either personalities that the government cannot afford to ignore their abduction or for fear of losing political relevance. Also, this type of kidnapping could be carried out in order to acquire some negotiations advantage over the government or simply for propaganda purposes. Here, the victim's immediate family has little or no role to play in securing the release of the victim, and as such the victim's fate rests on the outcome of the negotiations between his/her government and the criminal syndicates. A number of incidents of this type of kidnapping abound in the literature. The Boko Haram terrorist group in the north eastern Nigeria have in different occasions abducted school children in Chibok and Dapchi of Borno and Yobe states respectively. Notable individuals in the country such as the former president Olusegun Obasanjo have served as mediators between the group and the government on the negotiations table. The group has often negotiated for the swap of the abducted children with their imprisoned members. Thus, the political and ideological kidnapping tends to be more pervasive in countries with extremist militant groups or insurgents who often pick up arms against their government. One of the most popular terrorist groups which engaged in this type of kidnapping is the Al-Qa'ida which has kidnapped so many notable individuals and demanded a swap of its imprisoned members as a term for the release of the victims.

OSAC (2019) identified virtual kidnapping as the fifth type of kidnapping which, as the name implies, entails the use of the victim's details and daily routine by the criminals to claim having him with them through the use of an accomplice who pretends to be the hostage by crying and screaming for help from the family of the victim. This way the family of the victims would be compelled to send the demanded ransom – which is often not much so as to enable the family send the money in time. Meanwhile, the presumed victim might be elsewhere

engaged in his activities ignorant of what transpired between his family and the criminals. Virtual kidnapping is often targeted at individuals who live far away from members of their families such as foreign students, those who work abroad or those in transit. It is a scam that exploits panic, fear and urgency (USSS, 2016). The modus operandi of the virtual kidnappers varies across space and time. In this type of kidnapping, the victim receives a call informing him/her about the kidnapping of their loved one thereby demanding a payment in order to secure his/her release. As part of the plan, a co-conspirator is hired to play the role of the victim through screaming and crying so as to make them believe that the kidnapping is real. Hence, the FBI has severally issued warnings concerning the growth of this scam known as virtual kidnapping.

Okoli and Agada (2014) also identified and described the following types of kidnapping: bride, express and tiger kidnappings. By bride kidnapping, the authors refer to a situation where a bride or bridegroom is taken to an unknown place with the intention to marry without the consent of his/her parent. Ottuh and Aitufe (2014) also identified this type of kidnapping as a common practice in traditional nomadic Asian and African societies. This form of kidnapping was earlier discussed by Yang, Lung, and Huang (2007) as a cultural dimension of kidnapping, arguing that the bride kidnapping be regarded as cultural practice of some Asian and African traditional communities where bride is captured against the will of her parents. It often occurs where the bride's family refuses to marry out their daughter to the groom. Consequently, the bride conspires with the groom and goes away to where they can get married and settle as a couple (Ottuh and Aitufe, 2014). What qualifies this act as kidnapping is taken away of the bride without the consent of her parents, even when she loves the groom.

Express kidnapping is a type of kidnapping which is informed by the desire to make a quick and 'express' money through coercing the victim to withdraw from an ATM. It usually does not last long as the victim usually is set free except if he/she proves uncooperative with the criminals. Hence, Okoli and Agada (2014) describe this type of kidnapping as being motivated by some financial interests. Thus, express kidnapping often does not involve huge amount of money, rather it is informed by the desire of the kidnappers to extort a small ransom that the victim's family or business associates can quickly raise in short time (Mohammed, 2008). However, this type of kidnapping, which mainly occurs in developing Asian and African countries, is often perpetrated by amateur kidnappers. Instances of this type of kidnapping abound in the media both print and electronic. For example, the kidnapping of a lady travelling to Port Harcourt in 2011 and who was released upon payment of a ransom in hundreds of naira, is an express kidnapping (Ottuh and Aitufe, 2014). The third category identified by Okoli and Agada (2014) is tiger kidnapping, and it refers to the process of holding a victim as a hostage with the view of using him/her to commit another crime. A situation where a bank manager is kidnapped and compelled to issue instruction to his subordinates to make an illegal transaction exemplifies tiger kidnapping.

Other researchers such as Oladeinde (2017) categorised kidnapping into three: target, spontaneous and aggravated. However, in spite of the preponderance of the types of kidnapping, they all target at taking an undue advantage over innocent victims.

5. Tactics and Targets of the Kidnappers

Like other organised crimes, kidnapping involves the use of offensive gadgets, weapons, technologies and sensitive information by the criminals (kidnappers) in order to forcefully take away their victims thereby instilling fears and terror in the minds of their relatives. Kidnappers are usually skilled, tactful and rational as they calculate the costs and benefits of their actions. Thus, successful kidnapping involves, among other things, availability of material and human resources, some level of technology, professional training in the use of sophisticated weapons etc.

As rational actors, kidnappers do have their targets. Numerous factors come into consideration when determining a potential target of kidnapping depending on the nature and purpose of the kidnapping operation. While in some instances political factors, religious course, revenge, prisoners' swap inform a kidnapping operation, in most cases, however, ransom is the major determinant of the calibre or category of people to be kidnapped. Thus, most kidnappers determine their targets based on the victim's Kidnap Ransom Value (KRV). KRV can be described as the 'strategic net worth of a kidnappee, which in essence, makes him/her a kidnap target' (Okoli and Agada, 2014). The main motive behind kidnap for ransom is to abduct a victim who is deemed wealthy enough to pay the ransom, or one who has blood relations or business associates that can pay the demanded ransom. Okoli and Agada (2014) concisely identified some determinants of KRV as highlighted in table 2 below:

Table 2: Determinants of Kidnap Ransom Value (KRV)

S/N	Factor	Illustration
1	Personal affluence of victim	This has to do with the material standing of the target victim
2	Family premium on victim	The fact that the victim is an only child, or the only male/female child raises his/her KRV
3	Corporate premium on victim	Business executives and strategic stakeholders of firms are accorded much value
4	Public stake/relevance	Political office-holders, paramount rulers, etc. are seen as possessing high ransom value
5	Social connections/networks	Members of eminent social friendship networks are also seen as high targets
6	Type of kidnappers involved	Petty kidnappers are likely to accept cheap ransom
7	The negotiation process	The quality and terms of the negotiation process is likely to help in determining the KRV

Source: Adapted from Okoli and Agada (2014).

From table 2 above, it can be understood that the ransom value of a potential victim of kidnapping is determined by his/her real socioeconomic standing and the kidnappers' perceived ransom worth of the victim. Thus, on one hand, one may face the risk of being kidnapped provided they personally own material possession or occupy certain high social

status in the society. On the other hand, one may be a kidnap target because of the net worth of their relatives and/or business associates/partners. In this regard, families of wealthy persons, politicians, celebrities, business tycoons among others, regardless of their socioeconomic status or other socio-demographic characteristics such as age, gender or religious inclinations are all targets of kidnap for ransom. This is because the ransom being demanded by the kidnappers can always be raised by the wealthy relatives. Instances where this type of scenario played out in Nigeria abound. For instance, the kidnap of the wife of the current governor of the Central Bank of Nigeria in 2016 where a ransom of 1.5 billion naira was demanded for her release is a good example of KRV (Mutum, 2016). This incident is an attestation to the fact that kidnap for ransom has become so pervasive in Nigeria that not only wealthy individuals, who are direct targets, are at risk but also low and medium profile individuals who are mostly indirect targets.

Furthermore, it is interesting to note that Nigeria has for long time been recognised by the international community as one of the top countries with high incidents of kidnapping in the world. For instance, Nigeria ranked as the 8th country on the list of top 10 kidnapping countries in the late 1990s as shown in tables 3 below:

Table 3: Top 10 kidnapping Countries (1999)

Country	Global ranking
Columbia	1 st
Mexico	2 nd
Brazil	3 rd
The Philippines	4 th
Venezuela	5 th
Ecuador	6 th
Former Soviet Union	7 th
Nigeria	8th
India	9 th
South Africa	10 th

Source: Adapted from Okoli and Agada (2014)

Ten (10) years after, another world ranking of the top 12 kidnapping countries indicated Nigeria as ranking 11th on the list. Table 4 below shows this ranking:

Table 4: Top 12 Kidnapping Countries in the World (2008)

Country	Global ranking
Mexico	1 st
Iraq	2 nd
India	3 rd
South Africa	4 th
Brazil	5 th
Pakistan	6 th
Ecuador	7 th
Venezuela	8 th
Columbia	9 th
Bangladesh	10 th
Nigeria	11th
Haiti	12 th

Source: Adapted from Okoli and Agada (2014)

However, a recent ranking conducted by the Constellis (2017) revealed that Nigeria now ranks 2nd on the top 10 kidnap for ransom risk countries in the world. Table 5 below shows the Constellis (2017) world ranking of top 10 countries at risk of kidnap for ransom:

Table 5: Top 10 Kidnap for Ransom Risk Countries

S/N	Country	Rank	Ransom Demand		
			Low-medium profile individuals	High profile individuals	Foreign nationals
1	Libya	1 st	\$100,000-150,000	\$150,000-1 million	\$ 5 – 8 million
2	Nigeria	2nd	\$27,600-276,000	\$50,000- 1 million	\$200,000-950,000
3	Venezuela	3 rd	\$450,000 & above	\$10 million	Unknown
4	Mexico	4 th	\$26,300 & above	\$211,000 & above	\$500,000-1million
5	Yemen	5 th	\$<100,000	\$100,000 & above	\$1 – 20 million
6	Syria	6 th	\$2,000 & above	\$20,000 & above	\$100,000
7	Philippines	7 th	\$6,500 & above	\$65,000 & above	\$108,000-21.5m
8	Iraq	8 th	\$<65,000	\$300,000	\$2 – 10 million
9	Afghanistan	9 th	\$<100,000	\$100,000 & above	\$20 million
10	Somalia	10 th	\$<30,000	\$30,000 & above	\$20 million

Source: Compiled by the author

From table 5 above, it can be seen that Nigeria occupies the second position on the list of the top 10 world kidnap for ransom risk countries. This can be validated by close examination of the number of incidents of kidnappings being recorded on daily basis in the country even while the unreported cases appear to be likely higher. The reason for the upsurge of kidnap for ransom is not unrelated to numerous socioeconomic factors that bother on the poor living standard of the poor who constitute the majority of the citizens.

6. Factors Driving Kidnapping in Nigeria

The burgeoning rate of kidnapping in Nigeria has attracted the attention of several scholars to research into its causes with a view to proffering some solutions. Even though kidnapping has been an age long criminal pathology, however, its recent prevalence and new dimensions are unprecedented in the history of Nigeria. Thus, criminal motivation, primitive accumulation and vicious capitalist exploitation have been identified by a number of researchers as drivers of kidnapping (Tzannelli, 2009).

Kidnapping in Nigeria is said to thrive due to the pervasive unemployment, particularly among the teeming youths. For instance, an empirical study conducted by Ayuba (2020) on the catalysts of kidnapping in some north western states, Nigeria revealed that kidnapping has become rampant in the region as a result of lack of employment opportunities for the youths. Majority of the youths in the region have abandoned agriculture which is its economic mainstay; they relocated to urban areas in search for nonexistent jobs. It is the pool of these youths who often engage in political thuggery during electioneering periods and get dumped by their political masters when the elections are over that take kidnapping as means of livelihood (Ayuba, 2020). Earlier finding by Chidi (2014) equally identified unemployment and loss of societal values as drivers of kidnapping in Nigeria. He based his argument on the fact that the number of graduates being produced by Nigerian tertiary institutions annually is not proportional to the job opportunities being created. Another factor found promoting kidnapping in Nigeria is moral decadence particularly among the youths Inyang and Ubong (2013). A later study by Ayuba (2020) also identified disappearance of core traditional moral values of respect for elders, communal sense of belonging, love for human lives and hard work as responsible for the scourge of kidnapping in Nigeria. Related to this is the argument of Onovo (2010) that the celebration of fraudsters by elites through conferment of traditional titles is not only an indictment on the societal values but also an encouragement for kidnapping as a quick evil way to wealth generation.

Poor governance has also been described as a driver of kidnapping in Nigeria. Inadequate provision of basic amenities such as potable water, good road network, effective healthcare delivery, quality education at all levels and most importantly government inability to ensure security of lives and properties have combined to produce an aggressive and frustrated young adults who eventually become security threat to the society (Ayuba, 2020). Lack of these basic amenities are but outcomes of the corrupt practices of the political elites over the years (Ogabido, 2009; Thom-Otuya, 2010; and Arewa, 2013), and which has eroded the confidence of most people in the Nigerian government.

7. Implications of Kidnapping for National Development

There is no gainsaying that the scourge of kidnapping has already done more harm to the corporate existence of Nigeria as a nation. Initially, when kidnapping of indigenous oil workers and expatriates was the order of the day in the oil rich Niger Delta region, people from other regions were quite aggressive and trade blames with the inhabitants of the region as constituting a clog in the wheel of progress of the country. Similarly, when the monster appeared in the north east of the country through the criminal activities of Boko Haram, particularly with the abduction of Chibok girls and Dapchi school children, the narrative changed from kidnapping to ruin the nation's economy in the Niger Delta to kidnapping to

Islamise the nation through the aid of international Islamic groups, thereby taking religious dimension. In similar vein, when the Fulani herdsmen took over the kidnapping as a business venture, the image of the country was further being smeared as various ethnic groups advanced their course of agitations and painted the country's leadership black by accusing it of promoting the Fulani 'jihadist agenda' because the sitting president is of Fulani extraction. In all these, the country's image suffered a lot of damage as it is being portrayed in a bad light before global community. The effects of these on the country are enormous and have manifested in the way the country is being regarded by many as one of the headquarters of kidnapping in the world.

Thus, researchers have made several attempts to highlight some of the serious implications of kidnapping for national development. One of the consequences of kidnapping is the scaring away of foreign investors, who are generally regarded as drivers of economic growth in any country. As earlier pointed out in table 1, a number of foreign nationals have been kidnapped and a huge amount of money was paid before their release. Hence, the Constellis (2017) ranked Nigeria as 2nd on the top 10 countries at risk of kidnap for ransom. The implication of the flight of investors from the country contracts the economy which further worsens the socioeconomic conditions of the citizens. In line with this argument, Chidi (2014) argued that the effects of kidnapping go beyond the psychological trauma it brings to the individual victims and their families as it scares potential economic investors thereby aggravating the unemployment rate and depriving the government foreign direct investment. Okoli and Agada (2014) succinctly enumerated the consequences of kidnapping in Nigeria where they argued that kidnapping does not only constitute a threat to public safety but also depopulate the nation through loss of lives thereby constituting a clog in the wheel of progress and development of the country. They further identified a decline in foreign direct investment, tourism which occurs as a result of the grim picture of the country being created by the activities of the kidnappers. Thus, several business have been shut down, tourist sites have been deserted thereby worsening the unemployment and poverty situation in the country.

Therefore, it is not out of place to assert that the spate of kidnapping in Nigeria has largely contributed in worsening its fragile economic and political structure. The greatest damage perhaps is the loss of confidence by the majority of the citizens in the capacity of government to discharge its constitutional mandate of securing their lives and properties.

8. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

In this study, historical trajectories and typology of kidnapping in Nigeria have been examined. Even though the phenomenon of kidnapping is not new in Nigeria, the new dimensions it takes in recent times and its prevalence have become serious issues of national concern. The study established the existence of different types of kidnapping with kidnap for ransom being the most prevalent and most trending in Nigeria. This is not unconnected to the pervasive poverty and unemployment, the quest for criminal accumulation of wealth, particularly among the teeming youths. Similarly, poor governance manifested in corrupt practices of public servants and political elites have been described as some of the motivating factors for kidnapping in Nigeria. Near absence of basic amenities such as good road networks, effective healthcare facilities, adequate educational facilities, provision of other essential public services such as electricity, quality potable water supply, equal access to jobs

or employment opportunities among others are all manifestations of political corruption which creates and promotes criminalities such as kidnapping in Nigeria.

In view of the pervasiveness of kidnapping in Nigeria, the study makes some policy recommendations with the view of curtailing the phenomenon in Nigeria. As part of the measures, the state governments should establish and empower local security apparatuses made up of indigenous people. This is because the indigenous security personnel are more likely effective in proper policing as they know every nook and cranny of the state. Secondly, state governments should enact and enforce stiff laws to promptly prosecute kidnappers. This will serve as deterrent to potential kidnappers in the states. Governments in all other 35 states and the Federal Capital Territory should emulate the death penalty adopted by Lagos state and the national assembly. Thirdly, since poverty has been found to play a motivating role in the rise of kidnapping incidence, poverty alleviation programmes should be designed and implemented effectively by governments at all levels. The federal government's N-power and conditional cash transfer programmes should be extended to accommodate more vulnerable people, and above all effective supervision must be ensured if the programmes are to transform lives of ordinary Nigerians. Also, as a measure of fighting poverty, local governments should engage their youths in vocational training since not all parents can afford tertiary education for their children. Similarly, the state governments should design and scale up a robust training of youths in ICT and other skills acquisition programmes. This way, the rate of redundancy and idleness among the youths will be drastically reduced, as the saying goes: "an idle mind is devil's workshop".

Lastly, the federal ministry of agriculture and rural development should double its efforts in enlightening local farmers on modern techniques of farming so as to enhance their productivity and boost their harvest. Equally, the federal government through the Ministry should further subsidise fertilizer for poor local farmers. Once these agricultural policies are formulated and effectively implemented, both the state and local government should as a matter of necessity provide minimum basic amenities such as good road network, electricity, pipe borne water, effective transportation system, healthcare delivery and educational facilities to the rural communities. These measures will go a long way in discouraging massive exodus of the youths from rural communities to urban areas.

References

- Adebayo, B. (2018). 'Two Americans and two Canadians kidnapped at gunpoint in Nigeria' Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com/africa> Accessed on 23/4/2020
- Akingboye, O. (2017). Four Herdsmen Arrested for Kidnapping Kinsmen's wife, son. *The Gaurdian*. Accessed on (21/2/2019)
- Arewa, J. A. (2013). Core National Values as Determinant of National Security and Panacea for the Crime of Kidnapping and Abduction in Nigeria. *Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies*, Lagos, Nigeria.
- Ayuba, M.R. (2020). Kidnap for Ransom: Exploring the catalysts in Kaduna, Kaduna State, Nigeria, *Zaria Sociological Journal*. Published by the Department of Sociology, Ahmadu Bello University Zaria 6(1)
- Bello, B. (2019). Residents worried as Daura district head spends 53 days in kidnappers' den *The Vanguard* Retrieved from www.vanguardngr.com Accessed on 23/4/2020

- Busari, S. (2018). UNICEF: Boko Haram has kidnapped more than 1000 Children in Nigeria. CNN. Retrieved on (02/03/2019)
- Chidi, N. J. (2014). Kidnapping in Nigeria: An emerging social crime and the implications for the labour market, *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 4 (1) 133-145.
- Chidi I.L., Rose, U. Uche, A. (2015). Stemming the Incidence of Kidnapping in the Nigerian Society: *Journal of Culture and Social Development* 12(1): 28-47.
- CNN Library, (2018). "Boko Haram Fast Facts" Retrieved from <https://www.cnn.com> Accessed on 23/4/2020
- Constellis, (2017). Kidnap for ransom risk top 10 countries. Retrieved from www.constellis.com Accessed on (04/06/2020)
- Ezeibe, C.C. and Eze, M.O. (2012). "Political economy of kidnapping in Nigeria – The South East Experience". *Journal of Liberal Studies*, 15 (1)
- Godwin, A.C. (2019). Fulani Herdsmen Strike Again in Benue, Kidnap Four Policemen Retrieved from: Daily Post, Accessed on (02/01/2020)
- Gyamfi, C.C., Ogugbuaja, C., and Nzeagwu, U. (2019). Boy kidnaps, drugs five-year old to death in Kano *The Guardian* Retrieved from www.guardian.ng Accessed on 23/4/2020
- Ibrahim, B. and Mukhtar, J.I. (2017). An Analysis of the Causes and Consequences of Kidnapping in Nigeria *An International Multi-Disciplinary Journal, Bahir Dar, Ethiopia* AFRREV 11 (4), S/NO 48 DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/afrev.v11i4.11>
- Inyang, J. D. and Ubong, E.A. (2013). The Social Problem of Kidnapping and its Implications on the Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria: A Study of Uyo Metropolis, *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, Published by MCSER-CEMAS Sapienza University of Rome, Vol.4, No.6.
- Johnson, A. (2018). Fulani Herdsmen have made over N100m from Edo Abductions. Retrieved from Pulse.ng. Accessed on (02/02/2019)
- Laessing, U. (2018). Two German archaeologists kidnapped in Nigeria have been freed: police *Reuters* Retrieved from www.reuters.com Accessed on 20/4/2020
- Matthew, O. (2019). Kidnapped DPO regains freedom after paying N3m ransom *The Punch* Retrieved from www.punchng.com Accessed on 23/4/2020
- Mohamed, M.K.N (2008). Kidnap for Ransom in South East Asia: The Case for a Regional Recording Standard. *Asian Criminology*, (3), 61-73.
- Mutum, R. (2016). Five recent high profile kidnappings in Nigeria, Abuja: *Daily Trust Newspaper*
- Ogbuehi, V. N., (2018). Kidnapping in Nigeria: The Way Forward *Journal of Criminology and Forensic Studies Volume 1; Issue 3*
- Odoma, S.U., and Akor, L.Y. (2019). Kidnapping: A lucrative crime in 21st century Nigeria. *Global Journal of Human Social Science* (c) XIX(III), Accessed on 23 March 2020
- Ogabido, G. O. (2009). Kidnapping: New Brand of Terrorism. Saturday Sun. p. 7.
- Ojo, O. (2017). Fulani herdsmen kidnap housewife, rape her for three days Retrieved from www.sunnewsonline.com Accessed on 22/4/2020
- Okoli, A. C. and Agada, F. T. (2014). Kidnapping and national security in Nigeria, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, Vol. 4(6), 137-146.
- Oladeinde, A. (2017: February 21). "State of the nation", being a Television Programme transmitted by Channels Television, Lagos.

- Onovo, O. (2010). *Security challenge in South-east and South-south*, being text of a speech delivered during the South-East and South-South Security Summit organized by the National Association of Chambers of Commerce, Industry, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA) in Enugu.
- Overseas Security Advisory Council (2019). Kidnapping: The basics. Bureau of diplomatic security. Retrieved from: [@osacstate](https://oig.state.gov). Accessed on (06/06/20)
- Ottuh, P. O. O. and Aituf, V. O. (2014). Kidnapping and moral society: An ethnic-religious evaluation of the Nigerian experience. *European Scientific Journal*, 10 (14): 420-434.
- Pharaoh, R. (2005). An Unknown Quantity: Kidnapping for Ransom in South Africa. <http://www.iss.co.za/pubs/crimeQ/No.14/pharaoh.pdf>, (Retrieved on 20/02/2014).
- Tauna, A. (2019). Assistant Commissioner of Police, Musa Rabo rescued from kidnappers *Daily Post* Retrieved from www.dailypost.ng Accessed on 22/4/2020
- Thom-Otuya, B.E.N. (2010). Kidnapping: A Challenge to Nigeria Security System *International Journal of Social Sciences*, 2(8), Pp. 107-116
- Turner, M. (1998). Kidnapping and Politics. *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, 26: 145-160.
- Tzanelli, R. (2009). Capitalising on value: Towards a sociological understanding of kidnapping. *Sociology* 40(5). pp. 929-947. DOI: 10.1177/0038038506067516
- United Nations Office for Drugs Control (2003). International Cooperation in the Prevention, Combating and Elimination of Kidnapping and Providing Assistance to the Victims. http://www.unodc.org/pdf/crime/commissions/12_commission/7e.pdf, (Retrieved on 11/06/2018).
- Universal Safety and Security Solutions (2016). Six common kidnap and ransom scenarios Retrieved from [file:///6%20Common%20Kidnap%20and%20Ransom%20Scenarios%20-%20Houston%20Security%20Agency,%20Protection%20Services,%20Security%20Consulting,%20Investigation,%20Security%20Training.html](http://6%20Common%20Kidnap%20and%20Ransom%20Scenarios%20-%20Houston%20Security%20Agency,%20Protection%20Services,%20Security%20Consulting,%20Investigation,%20Security%20Training.html) Accessed on (04/06/20)
- Yang, Shu-Lung B.W, Huang, S. (2007). Kidnapping in Taiwan: The Significance of Geographic Proximity, Improvisation and Fluidity. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, (51), 324-339 (Retrieved 23/06/2018)
- Zannoni, I. E. (2003). *Understanding and managing the threat of kidnapping*. Retrieved from: <http://securitysa.com/article.asp?pkArticleID=2443&pkIssueID=333&pkCategoryID=88>.