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# **Vigilantism, State, and Society in Plateau State, Nigeria: A History of Plural Policing (1950 to the present)**

**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
(Dr Phil) in African History awarded by BIGSAS at Bayreuth University**

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## **Summary**

The focus of my doctoral research is to account for the emergence and continued existence of a plural policing landscape in Plateau State, Nigeria. Plateau State, the spatial context of my doctoral project is an administrative unit of Nigeria's federal structure. The research seeks to trace and shows an otherwise little known link between the plural policing landscape of colonial Nigeria and the evolution of a new plurality of policing, that began to emerge in the first decade after independence and has continued to evolve in response to changing political and social contexts. To do this, the research seeks to answer three main questions: First, who are the groups that have constituted and still constitute the main actors in a plural policing landscape? In other words, what are their origins; how have they been structured and internally organised? The second question is to understand how these groups encounter the Nigerian state. The research is interested in examining the dynamics that characterize relationships and interactions within a space of plural policing. The third key question of this doctoral research is focused on understanding the effects and impacts of non-state policing, as a phenomenon what does it create? How have these groups responded to changing political and social context?

To conduct this research I have largely deployed historical methodology, embedded in qualitative methods. This is to specifically account for the origins and changing forms of plural policing, but also to examine its contemporary manifestations, selected ethnographic methods have been deployed to complement the historical methods of data collection. I rely on primary and secondary data. The historical and contemporary salience of the phenomenon of plural policing led me to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach that draws from history, sociology, anthropology and political science. The conceptual framework is constructed based on how the concepts of the state, vigilantism, authority and plurality of security institutions are understood and situated within the research context. The concepts I engage with are in two categories, the first category are concepts that provide the empirical context of the thesis (state and vigilantism), and the second category provides us with the basis for understanding the relational dynamics (plurality and authority) of the empirical context. My analytical framework seeks to accommodate useful ideas from the different disciplines that contribute to our understanding of the historical role of state and non-state actors in plural policing. In this thesis, I have made four major arguments.

The first main argument is that current forms of institutionalised plural policing in Plateau State, Nigeria can be traced back along a historical trajectory to the institutionalisation of paramouncy in the chieftaincy institutions of the Plateau province from the early 1940s to the late 1950s. The dismantling of the former Native Authority Police in the late 1960s, the Nigerian government's policy in the mid-1970s to reform local government, and the attempt by traditional rulers to re-assert some semblance of influence and authority. The major link in this process of institutionalising plural policing is the institution of traditional rulership. The processes of negotiating change revolved around the traditional rulers. Furthermore, I demonstrate how the Nigerian state was involved in the formation of vigilante groups in the 1980s; the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) influenced this. Furthermore, following on this argument I have tried to show that even though having evolved on different trajectories the macro processes analysed speaks to the need to reform Nigeria's current policing structures.

Secondly, I have argued that the current plural policing landscape in Plateau State Nigeria is a product of different influences over the historical trajectory. The earliest and most profound influence on policing has been the influence of the military. This process of socialisation has been midwifed by Nigeria's war history (1st and 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, and the Nigerian Civil War). Socialisation was based on army ideals and practice because most recruits in the first instance were soldiers. After several decades of military rule, the police themselves had not come out unscathed. In sum, the Nigerian military had largely played an instrumental role in the socialisation of institutions, groups, and individuals who make claim to providing policing services and the maintenance of law and order. Also important in these institutional trajectories of policing are influences drawn from the immediate socio-political landscape, cultural templates of law and justice, and the interventionist state sponsored socialisation, as manifest by the influences of the colonial and post-colonial state police. What emerges from this argument and analysis of socialisation is that what we are currently witnessing may be an advanced stage of institutionalised plural policing but it is not yet definitively formed. The process is yet still unfolding before our very eyes for example the recent active involvement of vigilante groups and hunter associations in the fight against insurgency in northeast Nigeria, has created new dynamics of socialisation, institutionalisation and legitimisation of plural policing.

Following from the two previous arguments where I have showed how the institution of policing in Nigeria has gone through different periods and experienced different processes. From the composition, structures and ultimately practice have not remained static. My third argument is to suggest that while understanding these processes at the macro level is important, the picture is however only complete when we extend the analysis to the micro narrative. Therefore, I have examined the transformation of plural policing by focusing on micro narratives. I have tracked and analysed everyday policing practice from the lens of the NAPF and vigilante groups. On one hand, this means understanding the practice of the NAPF and vigilante groups as it relates to plural policing during British colonial rule, when the NAPF were active and the period from the late 1970s to the 1990s, which tracks the emergence and acceptance of vigilante groups as part of the policing landscape. On the other hand, this micro narrative focus has equally offered insight into the relationship between the NAPF / vigilante groups and the Nigerian Police Force, again this has been historicised from the lens of the NAPF and the vigilante groups. Using profiles of NAPF men and vigilante group members we are able to weave together an intimate history of plural policing. This is in contrast to some existing literature, thus, it is in such ventures that this thesis makes effort of departure from existing literature. If there is a core thrust of this perspective, it is the argument that macro analysis of policing while important in presenting and understanding grand trends ultimately provides a partial and insufficient analysis of what transpired. As part of this micro focus, I also engage with the use of violence as policing practice. This refers to the everyday use of violence by the NAPF, and by the vigilante groups that succeeded the NAPF. I argue that there is domestication, legitimisation, and an institutionalisation of violence; there is a societal acceptance tacit and complacent of the use of violence as part of policing practice. It is in such context that I have analysed and understood state and non-state policing violence.

The last major argument of this thesis is drawn from an analysis of the latest stage of plural policing. I argue that the latest and current feature of this plurality is characterised by the activities of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN), a semi-official citizens policing organisation registered in 1999 with Nigeria's Corporate Affairs Commission. The objectives of the VGN as is clearly spelt out in the organisation's constitution is to support state agencies (particularly the Nigerian police) in combating crime and general maintenance of law and order in society. Therefore, plurality in this context refers to a policing landscape that actually

bridges the state and non-state divide. Furthermore, I argue that an example such as the VGN questions the formulation of vigilant practice as something, which solely confronts and contest the writ of the state. My thesis seeks to show that in studying current policing practice we have to take into account the role of non-state actors, not always as a spontaneous communitarian response to a weak or absent state but rather as an extension of the state. Plural policing as historically evolved and currently practiced in this part of Nigeria is about statecraft from below. What has emerged from this study reveals that the vigilante groups that emerged from the historical process of institutionalisation of plural policing actually support the state and its agencies. Therefore, while the Bakassi Boys, the OPC and the Hisbah were emerging on to the scene the VGN was being registered, consequently the structures, organisation, and practices of vigilantism were being further transformed with the active approval and involvement of the state. In sum, the study contributes in a very innovative way to the debates on state building in Africa, debates on vigilante practice, and policing.

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**Acronyms**

ASP Assistant Superintendent of Police

COP Commissioner of Police

DO District Officer

DPM Director of Personnel Management

DPO Divisional Police Officer

FIR First Investigation Report

IGP Inspector General of Police

LGA Local Government Area

NA Native Authority

NAPF Native Authority Police Force

NEPU Northern Elements Progressive Union

NPC Northern People's Congress

NPF Nigerian Police Force

NSDC Nigerian Security and Defence Corp

OPC Oodu'a People's Congress

PCRC Police Community Relations Committee

RNC Royal Niger Constabulary

RO Resident Officer

SAP Structural Adjustment Programme

UMBC United Middle Belt Congress

VGN Vigilante Group of Nigeria

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1. How I Came To Study Plural Policing

The decade from 2001 to 2010 was violent for the people of Jos, and Plateau State Nigeria.<sup>1</sup> In January 2010, I was six months in to my return from 18 months MA Fellowship at King's College London and was considering topics and themes for Doctoral studies. It was at this point that another wave of violence broke out in Jos, and quickly spread out to rural areas of Jos North and Jos South local governments.<sup>2</sup> At the time, I was resident in the University of Jos, Senior Staff Quarters, Bauchi Road. Some interesting dynamics are relevant to recount. In close proximity to the staff quarters on Bauchi road is a predominantly Hausa, Muslim quarter of this part of the city. The residents of the staff quarters on the other hand are predominantly Christian. This religious dynamic created tension between the residents of the quarters and their Jasawa<sup>3</sup> neighbours. It is within this setting that tension was heightened within the neighbourhood by another wave of violence in early 2010. The residents of the staff quarters, mostly university academics realised that they had to introduce security initiatives and take immediate measures to secure the quarters. It had become too precarious not to organise. A security committee was promptly set up, and sub-committees were established on every block within the quarters. This was how I got involved. I was part of a patrol sub-committee in my immediate neighbourhood. Every night at approximately 21.00-22.00 until 05.00 or 06.00 we took turns in groups of four to patrol the neighbourhood. We particularly had two core concerns. Firstly, to secure the quarters and raise an alarm if there was an attack from our Jasawa neighbours. Secondly, and perhaps more critical for us, was restraining our own younger residents from initiating an attack on the Jasawa community. We did this on an ad hoc basis for two weeks. We were relieved by a detachment of the Nigerian air force, deployed to secure the university quarters. The air force detachment remained with us for several months until relative peace had returned to Jos and its environs.

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<sup>1</sup> There have been detailed studies of the Jos crisis for example see U.H.D Danfulani and S.U. Fwatshak, "Briefing: The September 2001 Events in Jos, Nigeria" *African Affairs* (London RAS) (2002): 101. Adam Higazi, "The Politics of Urban Violence in Jos, Nigeria, from Colonial rule to the 2007 elections", *Politique Africaine*, No.106, (2007): 69-91. Adam Higazi, The Jos Crisis: A Recurrent Nigerian Tragedy, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, Discussion Paper No.2, January 2011. Phil Ostien, Jonah Jang and the Jasawa: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Nigeria, Muslim Christian Relations in Africa, 2009, [www.sharia-in-Africa.net/pages/publications.php.August2009](http://www.sharia-in-Africa.net/pages/publications.php.August2009) and Mustapha, Abdul-Rauf; Higazi, Adam; Lar, Jimam; Chromy, Karel, "Jos: A Decade of Fear and Violence in Central Nigeria" and "Jos: Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Conflict Resolution" in, Mustapha, A.R. and Ehrhardt, D. (Eds) *Creed and Grievance: Muslims, Christians and Society in Northern Nigeria* (James Currey, Boydell and Brewer Ltd, forthcoming May, 2016)

<sup>2</sup> Higazi, The Jos Crisis: 20-30.

<sup>3</sup> The Hausa Muslims of Jos refer to themselves as Jasawa - *Hausawan Jos* (Hausas of Jos).



Furthermore, one could take a cynical reading of the state and its agencies by questioning the intentions of the deployment of the Nigerian air force to secure the university quarters. This would be to draw a sceptical point on whether the deployment was for protecting the citizens residing in the quarters or rather meant to secure state property, or perhaps even both. If the intention were to protect citizens then it would be logical to inquire why the state fails to extend such to all citizens. In other words by virtue of residing in the quarters of the university, we assumed a status of privilege above other citizens of Jos. While there may be security agents stationed in different quarters of Jos in times of such mayhem, government residencies like the university of Jos quarters are prioritised.

My experience during this time got me curious and therefore I decided to check around other neighbourhoods in Jos. I tried to find out how those who did not have the privilege we had of the air force or other security agencies being deployed to secure their neighbourhoods coped with the situation. How did other residents of Jos organise their security? I quickly found out that citizens across the city had various arrangements in place not just for security during episodes of collective violence but even for everyday regular policing. In the Hausa quarter of Gangare, I was told of the existence of community vigilantes over a long time span who were organising as community defence groups following the recurring episodes of violence in the city. The ward head of Chwelyap (Congo Russia), in the Nassarawa quarters of the city, talked of the commitment of the youth in the area in defending the people and property during periods of violence, but also patrolling the area after the violence. In Kabong and Tudun Wada, I found similar accounts of community vigilantism. These were community initiatives driven by local leaders and youth associations in response to collective violence, but built on already existing forms of citizen policing. What I realised was that there were citizen policing group operating side by side with the state police with the objective of maintaining law and order in the city.

The notion of contemporary plurality is however twofold: On one hand is the form of plurality just described in the preceding sentences. For lack of a better formulation, I refer here to state and non-state policing actors constituting the policing landscape across the state. The other plurality is the plurality within the Nigerian state, though the focus of this thesis is on the former, an example of what is meant by plurality within the state is instructive. Presently in Nigeria, other state agencies are carrying out daily policing duties side by side with the Nigeria police. On occasion, it is not clear to citizens which security agency is in charge of

which function. This creates confusion amongst citizens in regards to the mandate of such agencies in relation to the Nigerian Police Force (NPF). An example of this is the establishment of state security agencies like the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). Initially established as a voluntary organisation during the Nigerian civil war, the NSCDC gradually increased in its membership and following its spread across the federation, underwent organisational restructuring in the early 1980s transforming the corps into a national voluntary security outfit. In 2003, the Nigerian government passed a law that gave the NSCDC statutory status as a federal government para-military institution. It was an attempt to come to grips with these varied levels and forms of plurality that provided the motivation for this thesis.

Now back to my opening story. At the time, I considered the question as to how one should interpret the initiative of university staff, whose job is teaching and research and yet compelled by circumstances to organise to secure their residence. The fact that we did this for two weeks could suggest that this represents the failure of the state through its security agencies to protect citizens and secure government property in times of such collective violence. The scenario we found ourselves in was by no means unique to us, as I found out other citizens were engaged in such practice for much longer periods. Citizen policing had become part of policing practice. The scenario could be framed in another perspective. Interestingly, one could also argue that it was not the deployment of the air force that brought the state back into the picture; rather, even when the residents of the staff quarters were organising their security committees the state was already actively involved, but in a different mode. Here I refer to the security department of the University of Jos. The Chief Security officer of the University of Jos was actively supervising our efforts and providing advice. It would therefore be incomplete to render our efforts as purely citizens organising on their own to secure their residence. The state through its agency, in this case, the university authority was still part of our initiative. Likewise, the communities around the city of Jos that I gave as examples of citizen policing arrangements equally had the involvement of the police in some capacity. Often, such arrangements are framed as community policing initiatives. There are examples of these groups that seek permission and the mandate to practise from the police. They also actively cooperate with the police and support everyday policing practice.

Concisely what this whole account reveals is that there are varied policing actors apart from the Nigerian Police Force - and in times of collective violence, the Nigerian military - across

the landscape of Plateau State. While state institutions still remain the primary statutory bodies responsible for policing and the maintenance of law and order, over the years a plethora of groups have emerged and have made claims to providing policing services, and maintaining law and order. These groups as I have argued throughout this thesis are constitutive of Nigeria's policing landscape. This then is the starting point of my inquiry. Within this frame, this thesis is intended as a contribution to the study of how institutions, agency and processes of plural policing have been constituted and reconfigured.

The study is intended as a contribution to three existing bodies of literature. First, it contributes to the literature on the study of the Nigerian state through an understanding of state practice, and how this has contributed to the transformation of plural policing in Nigeria. In this sense, it is an institutional history of plural policing. Secondly, the study sheds light on the practice of policing in Nigeria, from a historical perspective. This perspective is emic, and from below. The focus of the thesis is therefore not solely on institutions and structures; it is also about understanding the role of actors, and their lived experiences (forms of mobilisation, motivations, rationale and function) within a plural policing landscape. Thirdly, the study is also a study of processes. The usage of the category of process in this thesis is twofold: a historical approach, to help us understand processual encounters and ruptures and how this reconstitutes and reconfigures the historical trajectory. How events at a given time configure possibilities and constraints on what will occur subsequently. I have also used process to understand the socio-political trajectory of institutionalisation, and socialisation of plural policing. In sum, this refers to the process of state building. Process therefore carries a dual category. It denotes historical change, while also drawing on the change of institutional structures.

## **1.2. Research Questions**

The research seeks to trace and show an otherwise little known link between the plural policing landscape of colonial Nigeria and the evolution of a new plurality of policing in contemporary Nigeria. This began in the first decade after independence in 1960, and has continued to evolve in response to changing political and social contexts. My thesis seeks to show that in studying current policing practice we have to take into account the role of non-state actors, not always as a spontaneous communitarian response to a weak or absent state but rather as an extension of the state. Plural policing as historically evolved and currently practiced in this part of Nigeria is about statecraft from below. The thesis historicises varied

themes; I am interested in how non-state policing actors have been and are currently socialised and the formulation of a certain form of ‘vigilante identity’, vis-à-vis other important forms of social group belonging, for instance ethnic, religious, and generational identity. Vigilante groups operate based on different legal codes, some statutory, others influenced by the historical experience of practice carried on from one generation to another. Taking the forgone background, the overarching objective of this thesis is to account for the origins and transformation of plural policing from the perspectives of the policing actors on the ground.

Therefore, the main research question is to account for how the contemporary plural policing landscape of Plateau State, Nigeria was historically constituted. To do this, the research seeks to answer four main questions:

First, who are the groups that have constituted and still constitute the main actors in a plural policing landscape? To what extent is it possible to provide a profile of plural policing actors? How have they been structured and internally organised?

Secondly, what is the role of plural policing actors? How have they functioned in the different historical epochs studied in the thesis? How have they responded to changing political and social contexts?

The third question is to understand how these groups encounter the Nigerian state. The state as conceptualised in the thesis<sup>4</sup> refers to the Nigerian government at national, state and local government levels. The research examines the dynamics that characterize relationships and interactions within a space of plural policing.

The fourth key question of this doctoral research is to understand the effects and implications of plural policing. As a phenomenon, what does it create?

### **1.3. Scope and Periodization**

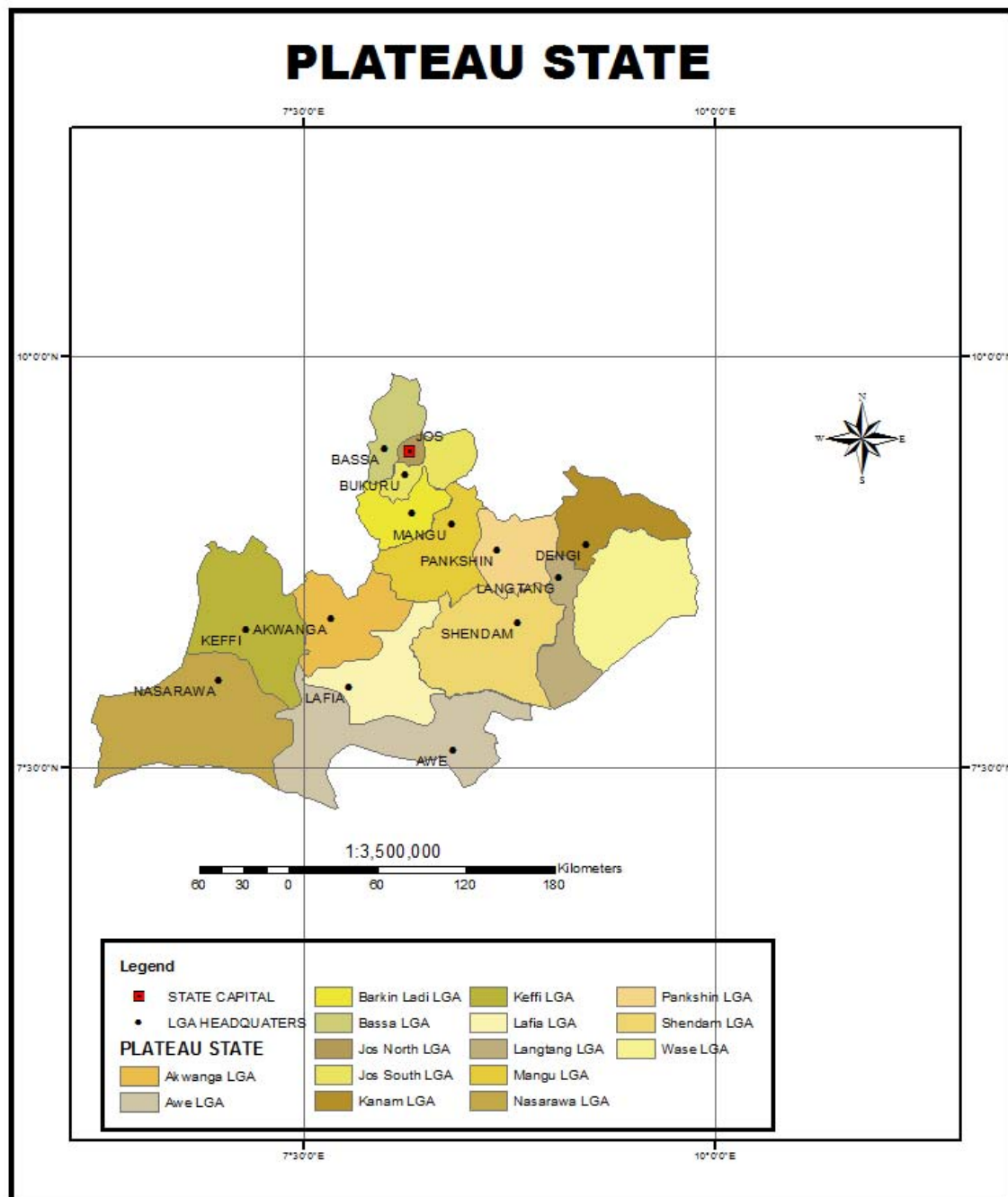
To conduct this study I selected some specific local government areas. The study is not attempting a systematic coverage of the whole Plateau State; I have rather selected particular local government areas for understanding change with regard to socialisation, plurality, authority, and institutionalisation in policing. The local government areas studied are

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<sup>4</sup> For more on this please see conceptual framework.

Langtang North, Shendam, Pankshin and Jos North. What should be of note here is the fact that during the late 1970s through to the 1980s when vigilante practice had begun with the active involvement of traditional rulers, the same area of Plateau State had fewer local governments with wider coverages; therefore, the particular local government areas studied here had a wider administrative area of coverage then. Jos North was created in 1991 out of the former Jos Local Government Area (LGA), which prior to that comprised the current Jos North, Jos South and Jos East LGAs. Pankshin formerly comprised the present Pankshin and Kanke LGAs, and the former Langtang LGA comprised of present day Langtang North and Langtang South LGAs. The former Shendam LGA constituted the current Shendam, Qua'an Pan, and Mikang LGAs. Therefore, for instance in my discussion of traditional rulers, leading the mobilisation for vigilantism in the 1980s – when reference is made to traditional rulers like the Ngolong Ngas, Ponzhi Tarok, and Long Goamai mobilising their communities following directives from the federal and state governments, the area of jurisdiction they presided over included a wider area of coverage.

In regards to the scope of my study, another important factor to mention is that my research design is equally about the varied manifestations of vigilante policing across urban and rural settings. Thus, there is a comparative consideration of insights from the urban city of Jos, the semi-urban locations like Pankshin, Langtang and Shendam, and rural areas like Dadur, Pil-Gani, and Shimankar. I have selected vigilante groups from the city of Jos and other communities in Plateau State to compare. These selected cases collectively constitute a case study and provide insight on the impact of socialisation, institutionalisation, and violence on plural policing. The reference here to violence refers to the several outbreaks of sectarian violence in Jos, the state capital, and other parts of the state in the decade since September 2001.



Source: Ministry of Lands, Survey and Town Planning, Jos.  
Plateau State.

Cartographic work by Joshua B. Dusu (G.I.S Expert)

**Figure 1:** Map Nigeria's Plateau State (1976-1996) Local Government Areas.

Writing on the periodisation of African history, Ivan Hrbek notes “that historical periodisation is one of the means by which the historian can see historical development not only as a chronologically arranged succession of events and facts, but as a phenomenon with its own inner laws, with different stages, that can be interpreted in causal terms and that offers itself to a synthesis.”<sup>5</sup> These principles, as Hrbek further explains, depend on the historian’s approach to his subject matter. In this thesis, my approach to plural policing is informed by turning points, but also by continuities. With regard to the concentration in the thesis on the period from post-World War II, colonial Nigeria to the present is informed by the fact that the mid 1940s were critical as the period when the returning war veteran “natives” of what was then Plateau Province were recruited in large numbers into the NAPF. The policy was to constitute a trend in the 1950s.

The study is periodised into three historical epochs. The institutionalisation of paramountcy<sup>6</sup> as a new feature of the chieftaincy in the former Plateau Province from the early 1940s to the late 1950s and the manner in which the Native Authority Police became the fulcrum of local administration constitutes the first period of plural policing. The dismantling of the former Native Authority Police in the late 1960s; the Nigerian government’s policy in the mid-1970s to reform local government, and the attempt by traditional rulers to re-assert some semblance of influence and authority. This was followed by the Nigerian government’s introduction of vigilante policing, packaged as community policing initiatives in the wake of austerity occasioned by the Structural Adjustment Programme in the mid-1980s. This constitutes the second span of plural policing. The third and final era of plural policing considered in this work is that which we are currently witnessing and commenced in 1999. This hinged on Nigeria’s transition to civilian rule in May 1999 and the official registration of the Vigilante Group Nigeria (VGN). The post-1999 period focuses on a case study of the VGN.

What is interesting to note here is that, at the beginning of my study, I had set out to define the era(s) to be studied according to Nigeria’s political history. It is of course an enduring practice of Nigerian historiography to structure study and research periods into pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial. Alternatively, studies are done according to centuries. The 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> century histories for instance are some of the styles of periodization one would find in history textbooks, but equally in researched monographs. In my case the

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<sup>5</sup> Ivan Hrbek, “Towards a Periodisation of African History,” in T.O. Ranger (Ed), *Emerging Themes of African History*, (East African Publishing House, 1974), 37-38.

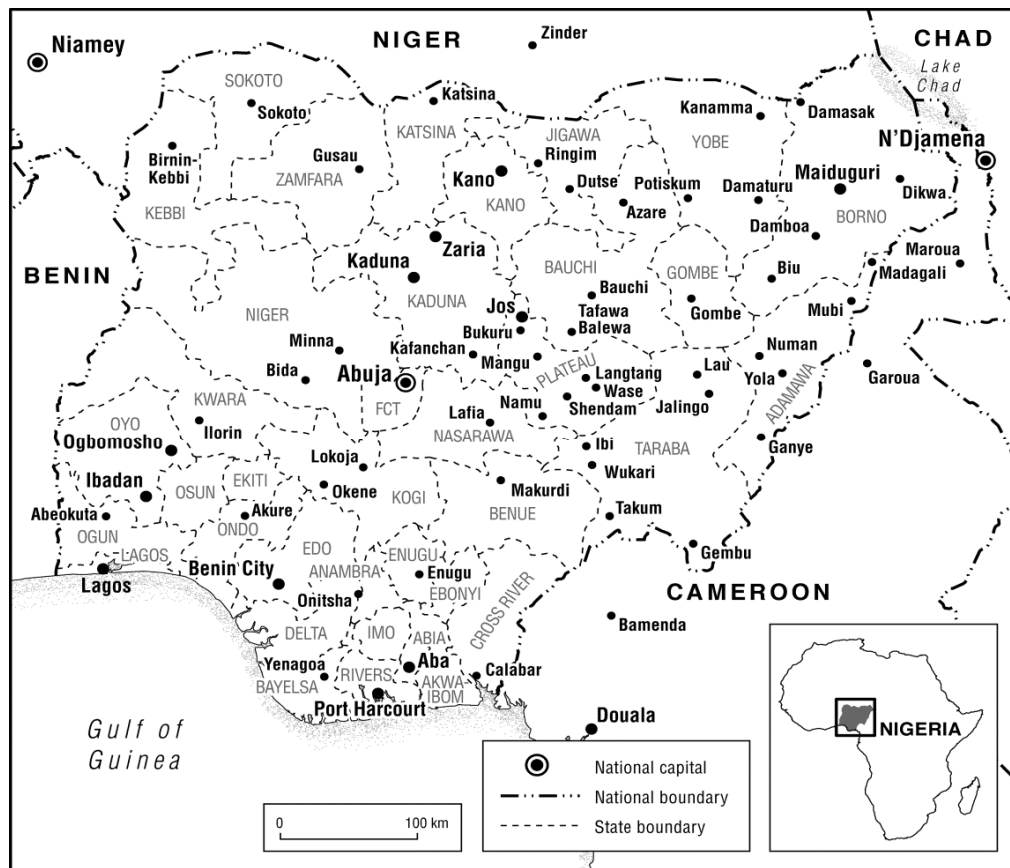
<sup>6</sup> This refers to the socio-political transformation of chieftaincy institutions from clan stool to chieftaincy institutions presiding over ethnic groups. It represented the political institutionalisation of the ethnic category.

moment I delved deep into the field work particularly the data I recovered from oral histories, it became very clear that a political periodization of Nigerian history that would attempt to define the 20<sup>th</sup> century by two sub-periods:<sup>7</sup> the colonial and the post-colonial epochs, would not capture the historical evidence gained from my research. If we are to designate the three aforementioned eras in terms of the history of plural policing, I would designate the first epoch as the time of establishing plural policing, the second would represent a period where a new era is emerging but with strong vestiges of the outgone one. When examined this would constitute its own epoch. The final epoch, is that of renewal and crystallisation, where plural policing is seen to have been newly institutionalised. What emerges from all these periodization attempts has consequences for specific outcomes. What is important for the historian is not just examining temporal divides, what they mean and their implications. Of importance are also the trajectories across the periods and their complex outcomes. As stated earlier, a defining characteristic of these historical processes, relationships and outcomes is their ambivalence. Important processes of change can be seen because of attempts to overcome certain ambivalences, which, however, only led to a reproduction of these ambivalences – often in a different form but with the constitutive characteristics remaining in place. What seems to emerge here is a cyclical process of historical change.

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<sup>7</sup> This is a common structure to be found in dissertations and published monographs on Nigerian history.





**Figure 2:** The Federal Republic of Nigeria showing its thirty-six states and some major towns in core area of my current research in Plateau State.<sup>8</sup>

#### 1.4. Plateau State, Historicising Resistance and the Minority Politics

Plateau Province, initially made up of Jos and Pankshin Divisions, was carved out of Bauchi and Muri Provinces in 1926. My study focuses on two main areas of the former Province. While the urban city of Jos, situated on the Jos Plateau, is critical for my study of urban plural policing, the main data for the study was drawn from the former Shendam Division of the Plateau Province. The Shendam Division during the colonial period was the land area situated on the right bank of the Benue River, south of the central Nigerian Plateau. It is the low-lying continuation of the lower Benue plains,<sup>9</sup> formerly part of Wase District in Muri Province, it was formerly Lowland Division. As an administrative unit of Nigeria's federal state structure, Benue-Plateau was created in 1967; Plateau State in 1976, Nasarawa state was carved out of Plateau in 1996. Jos was the administrative headquarters of Plateau Province and has been a state capital since the Nigeria regions were divided into states in 1967.

<sup>8</sup> Map taken from: Adam Higazi and Jimam Lar, "Articulations of Belonging: The Politics of Ethnic and Religious Pluralism in Bauchi and Gombe States, North-East Nigeria". *Africa* 85, 1, (2015):103-130.

<sup>9</sup> B.F. Bawa "Origin, Migrations and Early History of the Lowland Communities of Plateau State", Aliyu A. Idrees and Yakubu A. Ochefu (eds), (Studies in the History of Central Nigeria Area, Lagos: CSS, 2002), 71-72.

Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, the intensity and virulence of the conflict within the Nigerian landscape has regularly punctuated attempts to engender democracy and the rule of law. Plateau State and particularly the capital Jos represent one of the most volatile of these violent theatres of conflict. Since September 2001, Jos and its environs have witnessed incessant episodes of sectarian violence. Jos is a city of about 1.6 million people in central Nigeria, and as earlier stated the capital of Plateau State. It is part of the middle belt, an ethnically diverse zone made mostly of minority ethnic groups, running across central Nigeria. In November 2008, there was renewed violence in Jos during local government elections in which at least 800 people were killed. The conflict was not resolved and more violence broke out in January 2010, the worst affected areas this time being in the rural areas on the edge of Jos.

While my study is more focused on a history of policing institutions and the agency of policing actors, in order to understand the relational analysis that follows in subsequent chapters of this thesis it is important to grasp the historical relationship between the minority groups of Plateau State and the Hausa-Fulani emirates of northern Nigeria. I have referred to this throughout the thesis. The contemporary circle of violence in Jos, and Plateau State for example shows how mobilisation is along the fault lines religion and ethnicity and characterised by historical tension and mutual suspicion. While there is a history of trade and cordial relations, the predominant dynamic of the relationship between the Hausa-Fulani Emirates of Northern Nigeria and the non-Muslim communities of central Nigeria before the arrival of the British is characterised by denigration of the non-Muslim groups by the Hausa-Fulani, this is reciprocated with distrust and suspicion. To understand this, there is need to briefly recapitulate the history of the relationship, and highlight some of the main factors that defined the representation of Hausa-Fulani in the consciousness of the peoples of the Plateau Province. Two key points will suffice; the wars and experiences occasioned by the extension of the Sokoto Jihad to the non-Muslim communities; and long standing derogatory references to these areas as a backwater used for the purposes of slave raiding. In the wake of the Sokoto Jihad, armies from Bauchi and the *Zazzau* (*Zaria*) emirates made concerted efforts to conquer the Plateau polities, while they did make substantial inroads and penetrated the area, they did not succeed in conquering the people.<sup>10</sup> The impact of the Jihad on the Plateau in comparison to other parts of central Nigeria is considerably negligible. Mangvwat, relying on accounts by

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<sup>10</sup> Monday Mangvwat "Warfare on the Jos Plateau in the Nineteenth Century" in *Warfare and Diplomacy in Precolonial Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Robert Smith*, eds. Toyin Falola and Robin Law (African Studies Program: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1992), 112.

courtiers, and those written by colonial officers like C.G. Ames, asserts that: "...it is clear that during the reigns of both Yakubu and his successor Ibrahim, Bauchi fought wars with various groups on the Jos Plateau such as the *Ngas* of *Dawaki*, *Amper*, and *Garram*; the *Yergam* (*Tarok*); *Montol* (*Tehl*); *Goemai*; the *Berom*; and the *Mwaghavul* of *Panyam*."<sup>11</sup> Each of these groups fought the Jihad invaders separately, there were no particular alliances to deal with invaders and this made the conquest of the region difficult.<sup>12</sup> Mangwat has argued that the multiplicity of independent chiefdoms, each guarding its independence, was the crucial factor in the failure of the jihad on the Jos Plateau and the immediate environs rather than the allegedly difficult terrain, advanced largely in colonial records.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, incessant slave raids continued from the emirates into the central Nigerian area, or *Kasashen Bauchi*<sup>14</sup> as the Hausa referred to the area. In fact, in his introduction to the chapter, Adamu refers to the whole of the territory of the present Middle Belt of Nigeria "up to the valleys of the Niger and Benue...with the exception of Adamawa", as being part of Bauchi. It must be pointed out that at no time in its history did Bauchi have suzerainty over the whole of the area in question, the exceptions being that parts of the region had come under its control after British conquest, and prior to British conquest areas like Wase emirate were off shoots of Bauchi, and the Sayawa area was administered from Bauchi. In his well sourced article<sup>15</sup> on violence and the acquisition of slaves in the Bauchi Emirate in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Yakubu recounts that the core communities which Bauchi raided for slaves included the Sayawa (Zar); Angas (Ngas); Ankwe (Goemai); Doma; Montol (Tehl); and Yergam (Tarok).<sup>16</sup> However, Yakubu goes on to suggest that the absence of centralised political systems amongst these groups rendered them politically weak and thus "enabled their relatively easy subjugation by the more cohesive and disciplined emirate forces."<sup>17</sup>

It must be clarified that Yakubu while relying on source material collected from libraries and archives of the Bauchi ruling aristocracy, did not get the accounts of those whose ancestors

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>14</sup> See Mahdi Adamu, *The Hausa Factor in West African History*, (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1978) of particular significance for us is chapter two where Adamu discusses Hausa land and Kasashen Bauchi. In fact, in his introduction to the chapter Adamu refers to the whole of the territory of the present Middle Belt of Nigeria "up to the valleys of the Niger and Benue...with the exception of Adamawa", as being part of Bauchi.

<sup>15</sup> See Yakubu, M.A., "Violence and the Acquisition of Slaves in the Bauchi Emirate, 1805-1900", in *Warfare and Diplomacy in Precolonial Nigeria: Essays in Honor of Robert Smith*, eds. Toyin Falola and Robin Law (African Studies Program: University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1992), 145-156.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

had been enslaved, for example while Yakubu argues that the political weakness of the non-Muslim groups enabled their easy subjugation, accounts of these times from the Plateau groups refer more to slaving ambushes and Chiefs selling of criminal elements into slavery, rather than successful slaving raids defeating armies and carting away with slaves as Yakubu has suggested.<sup>18</sup> In interviews conducted during my field research, I heard accounts that provide a differing analysis, as these are the same groups who successfully resisted the emirate forces during the Jihad. The success of the slave raiders is explained by the methods and practice of slave raiding, as earlier mentioned slaves were mostly not captured as part of war booty, rather individuals were seized and kidnapped, on occasion in their farms or on raids and attacks on small villages.<sup>19</sup> When the commercial utility of slaving was established, captives from inter-ethnic battles amongst the Plateau people were sold as slaves to the emirates.<sup>20</sup>

The British invading the Plateau communities by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century experienced the same resistance that Jihadist had encountered earlier, though with a different consequence, owing largely to superior weaponry. Interestingly, as I show in my thesis the British conquest further extend Hausa political, social and cultural influence into the Middle Belt area. Prior to British colonization, institutionalised Hausa influence in the Middle belt had been limited to a few emirates<sup>21</sup>, established following the Sokoto Jihad in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, within the Middle Belt area. What Ochuno has termed “scattered systems” of emirate control that nominally oversaw some non-Muslim peoples while pragmatically ignoring others. Memories of these experiences are still alive across the present Plateau State. British colonisation introduced an administrative policy that placed non-Muslims under the control of emirates. This misreading of precolonial relations between the emirates (like Bauchi and Zaria) and the non-Muslim groups on the Plateau highlands, and the Jema’a area was continually resisted throughout the period of British colonisation. The culmination of this resistance was the rise in Middle Belt consciousness.<sup>22</sup> This explains why even contemporary sectarian violence in Plateau State occasioned by identity politics, is easily associated within the consciousness of the hitherto non-Muslim groups with Hausa-Fulani hegemonic tendencies.

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<sup>18</sup> Ali Dakshang, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Dadur-Langtang North, 04<sup>th</sup>.09.2012, Benjamin Voncir, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Langtang, 10.01.2015.

<sup>19</sup> Ali Dakshang, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Dadur – Langtang North, 04<sup>th</sup>.09.2012.

<sup>20</sup> Mangwat, “Warfare on the Jos Plateau,” 114.

<sup>21</sup> Examples of such emirates in the Plateau Province were Wase and Kanam.

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed and sustained analysis of this resistance see Moses E. Ochuno, *Colonialism By Proxy: Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle Belt Consciousness in Nigeria*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014), 77-85.

## **1.5. The Structure**

I have elaborated in the preceding sections on the research questions of this thesis, the scope and periodization of the study, and a brief background on the historical political context relevant as a basis to understanding my arguments and analysis on the history of plural policing in Plateau State Nigeria. The overall structure of the thesis is thematic. All the chapters are a discussion of the history of plural policing approached from different themes, there is a chapter on the government at the macro level and a chapter of the government at the micro level. A chapter that discusses socialisation and another chapter that focuses on the institutionalisation of plural policing, across the chapters I have discussed the relational dynamics of authority, violence and plurality. Following this introductory chapter, the thesis is divided into the following chapters:

In the methodological chapter, I illustrate how the research was carried out, focusing on processes of data collection and analysis. With selected local government areas that collectively constituted my case study; I set out to collect accounts of the lived experience of all stakeholders of plural policing practice. I discuss my experience in the field narrating the main highlights and experiences from my interviews in Plateau and Kaduna states, Nigeria to my trip to the United Kingdom to meet and interview former colonial administrators and police officers. My trip to the United Kingdom also included a research visit to the British archives, and the Rhodes library archives at Oxford University. Additionally, I have also considered the benefits and challenges of interdisciplinarity. The methodological process as I was reminded while in the field is not always fun. I recount the challenging experience of conducting fieldwork within a conflict context, and reflect on how this affects the research process even in circumstances where the research focus is not on the conflict.

In chapter three, I present the conceptual framework. The framework is based on two categories of concepts. First category are institutional concepts, I refer to the Nigerian state, the police and vigilante groups. The second category of concepts – plurality and authority provide the basis for understanding the relational dynamics. Relying on insights generated from my data, I situate my study within debates of state society relations, particularly in regards to policing practice showing points of convergence and divergence. The complementary dialectic between the existing literature reviewed and data generated from fieldwork creates the basis for my framework, and subsequently a historical and contemporary understanding of plural policing, as the basis of understanding state society relations emerges.

In chapter four, i argue that current forms of institutionalised plural policing in Plateau State, Nigeria have evolved from a direct historical trajectory to the institutionalisation of paramouncy in the chieftaincy institutions of the Plateau Province of Nigeria from the early 1940s to the late 1950s. In this chapter, I argue that the major transformative agent responsible for the processual change and the institutionalising of plural policing is the institution of traditional rulership. The processes of negotiating change revolved around the traditional rulers. Furthermore, I show how the interface between the Nigerian state at the national and local level further midwifed this process. In the contingent epochs that I have studied state practice through the implementation of chiefly paramouncy, local government reforms and the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) are connected to the configuration and reconfiguration of the policing landscape at the local level. In sum, I show how the contemporary plural policing landscape is a product of a socio-political historical process.

Using the notion of socialisation, chapter five examines the influences that have driven the practice of plural policing in Plateau State Nigeria. I discuss the socialisation processes of specific policing institutions and groups examined in my research. The main objective of the chapter is to show the historical socialisation processes that have influenced plural policing practice as manifested in the practices of the NAPF, *Yanbanga*, and the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN). I show how the trajectory of plural policing from the Native Authority Police Force (NAPF) to the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN), the alternative policing structures that have engaged in policing alongside the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) have been heavily influenced by the absorption of war veterans. Also important in these institutional trajectories of policing are influences drawn from the immediate socio-political landscape, cultural templates of law and justice, and the interventionist state sponsored socialisation, as manifest by the influences of the colonial and post-colonial state police. The main argument in this chapter is that the process of policing socialisation shows how vigilante practice mirrors society in all its facets and history. It is not just institutions that shape practice; we should also consider how agency is formed, by groups and individual actors.

In chapter six, I examine the transformation of plural policing by focusing on local narratives. I show how vigilante groups are able to substantiate their legitimacy by gradually expanding their activities and imbibing new modes of policing practice. This micro narrative focus has

equally offered insight into the relationship between the NAPF / vigilante groups and the Nigerian Police Force. As part of this micro focus, the later parts of the chapter present a discussion of violence as policing practice. This refers to the everyday use of violence by the NAPF, and by the vigilante groups that succeeded the NAPF. There is domestication, legitimisation, and an institutionalisation of violence; there is a societal acceptance tacit and complacent of the use of violence as part of policing practice. It is in such context that I have analysed and understood state and non-state policing violence.

Chapter seven continues the historical trajectory with a case study of contemporary vigilantism, in other words the contemporary case study is drawn from the historical process. I argue that this should be seen as the latest stage of a process of institutionalising plural policing. What emerges from this chapter reveals how the Vigilante Group of Nigeria presents us with a different logic of mobilisation in comparison with other vigilante groups we find in the literature on vigilantism in Nigeria. My main objective in this chapter is to show what this means for contemporary plural policing. I examine how the police and the VGN have interacted, through cooperation and negotiation. The VGN is an example of a vigilante group that has emerged from the historical process of institutionalising plural policing, and actively supports the state and its agencies.

In the concluding chapter, I seek to pull together common threads from the preceding chapters outlined above. To do this, I engage in dialogues, and for the process of institutionalisation, I consider the interface between the government at the macro and micro level. In concluding on socialisation I return to the discussion of the analytical category of ambivalence in our understanding of plural policing practice, highlighting the importance of violence but also demonstrating how policing actors engaged in rendering a 'proper policing service' to their communities. What therefore emerges, shown across the thesis is a duality that is constitutive of policing practice. I refer to the relational notions of authority and plurality, recapturing the relationships between the Nigerian state, and plural policing actors. Finally, I consider the wider implications and conclusions that can be drawn from the study. This is categorised in the immediate context of policing in Nigeria, and policing on a broader wider perspective.

## **Chapter Two: Methodology**

### **2.1. Introduction**

The main question of this thesis, as explained in the first chapter, is to account for the origins and the development of a plural policing landscape in Nigeria. It should be clearly stated that no single methodological approach was deployed in this research endeavour: rather, a toolkit of methods was used. A possible means “...of exploring the processuality of research in both the historical and the social sense would be to scrutinize the various research practices in their textbook sequence, from development of questions and hypothesis, through the various types and situations of data collection, to the evaluation and write up phase.”<sup>23</sup> However, I have primarily deployed a historical approach embedded in qualitative methods. This is to specifically account for the origins and changing forms of plural policing. To examine the contemporary manifestations of plural policing, selected ethnographic methods are used to complement the historical methods of data collection. Equally, I have relied on primary data (interviews and archival documents) and secondary data. Following this introduction, I discuss the tools of data collection, and then reflect on my experience of field research and particularly on how the socio-political context has influenced my research. I will also consider and discuss the analytical tools I have deployed to interpret and understand the data. My analysis follows a historical perspective to understand trajectories of change and continuity. I have also used the extended case method, to understand the interface between macro and micro historical processes. Drawing from my field research experience I have also reflected on the dynamics of conducting research within a conflict context, even if as it was, in my case my research was not focused on the conflict.

### **2.2. Historical Research and Multidisciplinarity**

Historical research over the decades has undergone some critical paradigm shifts. For my methodological approach, I am interested in three of these shifts, namely: History and the challenge of postmodernism; Historical research and its relationship to the social sciences; and the shift from a history of the rulers’ perspective to a history of the people (history from below).

In his well-received book about history and the postmodernist approach, Richard Evans notes that postmodernism has compelled historians to re-consider questions of “how we study

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<sup>23</sup> Achim von Oppen , *Bounding Villages: The enclosure of locality in Central Africa, 1890s to 1990s*, (Habilitation Treatise, Humboldt University, Berlin, 2003), 57.



history, how we research and write about it and how we read it.”<sup>24</sup> Furthermore, Evans argues that the core questions postmodernist scholars put forward, such as the claims for objective knowledge and the elusive and relative nature of historical “truth” have wider implications that go beyond the academic milieu. That also relates, according to Evans, to whether “society can ever attain the kind of objective certainty about the great issues of our time that can serve as a reliable basis for taking vital decisions for the future.”<sup>25</sup> Therefore, it is important to attempt a brief commentary and offer a position, particularly how these debates relate to this research project. To start with, one has to be very clear that the postmodernist idea that historians are in the vocation of creating – and not finding, uncovering, and interpreting historical understanding – undermines the purpose of historical research and should be vehemently refuted. After all, one of the core requirements of historical research is the adoption of a critical and well-grounded approach towards source criticism; in this sense, the process of historical research already embraces some level of reflexivity. Historians are socialised to be cautious over how they use their evidence, and interpret it to give analytical value to it. In other words, the first and primary obligation is to establish for instance that an event did occur, then proceeding to analyse what it meant and the consequence. Nevertheless, the aim of this procedure remains the reconstruction of historical realities. Historical knowledge about facts is therefore both desirable and attainable. However, when we reflect on our data and in the process of analysing and understanding what it is telling us, critical insights may emerge.

While I do not embrace the call of postmodernist to reconsider all historical facts as discourses, relative to different interpretations I have realised and thus argued in my thesis that we should accept contradictory realities as the outcomes of the historical trajectories studied. If there is a constant, theoretical thread that runs through this thesis it is the expression of ambivalence of events and processes. I would suggest that the quest for historical and contemporary reality in my study is not an either or scenario, the insight is to recognise and analyse realities that can be viewed in a contradictory way.

Secondly, as I have realised from my own PhD experience, historical narratives are not free of interest and perspective; they often set out to provide a historical justification for political and

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<sup>24</sup> Evans, Richard. *J Evans, In Defence of History*, (London: Granta Books, 2000), 1.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

social movements in the present.<sup>26</sup> The writing of history or historiography<sup>27</sup> illuminates two periods: the one it is written about, and the one it is written in.<sup>28</sup> In other words, I have approached the study of the history of plural policing from a vantage point of the present. It is no surprise that in presenting my narrative, right from the opening page of the introduction I invite the reader to consider the current state of plural policing in Plateau State, Nigeria, before presenting the history. Fred Cooper asserts that trying to illuminate present issues is a fine motivation for exploring the past; however, as one looks backwards, there is a risk of anachronism: confusing the analytical categories of the present with the ‘native’ categories of the past.<sup>29</sup> Of course, there is a risk of anachronism, particularly when we approach the past with the logics of the present, to render reliable and trustworthy history it is critical that we understand the historical past in its own context. This applies to social, political, and cultural context of the specific periods that are studied.

Writing history with the motivation that such a study will provide understanding on the present period, which the researcher lives in also raises questions of positionality. Eminent Nigerian historian Yusufu Bala Usman shows the importance of this point. According to Usman, “...since the purpose of historical study is to grasp the historical process for the purpose of influencing it then the only correct conceptual framework, for any epoch is that which provides a basis for the practical determination of the direction of (agency) in that epoch...every view you have of the past has specific implications regarding what you should do now.”<sup>30</sup> In other words, personal reflexivity is imperative for the process of history writing. Hence, Usman extrapolates the point further: “Once you are aware of your own historicity, then you will realize the historicity of the concepts that you use, and you do not sit down and accept them as if these have come down to you from heaven.”<sup>31</sup> In other words, recognising one’s own biases, positions and subjectivities informed by one’s historical experience is a critical starting point. Furthermore, it is important to recognise our positionality in the process of fieldwork, interpreting data, and writing. One has to readily recognise assumptions that are

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<sup>26</sup> Evans, *In Defence*, 149.

<sup>27</sup> This also refers to the study of the writing of history.

<sup>28</sup> Melvin Bragg, *In Our Time*, BBC Radio 4, 30.03.2000.

<sup>29</sup> Fredrick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, and History*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 18.

<sup>30</sup> Usman, Yusufu Bala “History, Tradition, and Reaction: The Perception of Nigerian History in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries”, in *Beyond Fairy Tales: Selected Historical Writing of Yusufu Bala Usman* (Zaria: Abdullahi Smith Centre for Historical Research, 2006), 21-22, also see Mamdani, Mahmood, *Define and Rule: Native as Political Identity*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2012), 91-92.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

drawn due to the influence of socialisation and has to attempt to rigorously resist the temptation to let these assumptions direct our inquiry. Consequently, I am attempting here to study the history of policing beyond the received knowledge in scholarly work and in Nigerian society that only describe the police in negative and disparaging ways, or as tools of political domination. The processes of institutionalisation and socialisation described and analysed in my thesis documents a policing history that is diverse and varied. The historical insights in turn guide my approach to examining the contemporary policing landscape. Earlier assumptions, and perceptions informed by my socialisation are therefore overtaken by the information that emerges from the study.

My second point in this section is a consideration of the scholarly shift in history from the perspective of elites to those of what has been called “the subalterns”, from “history from above” to “history from below”. In undertaking this study, I have been inspired by the historical scholarship that has focused its enquiry on the history of ordinary people. In recapitulating the intellectual history of modern historical writing Richard Evans notes that, “History...when it emerged during the professionalization process of the nineteenth century, was emphatically the political history of the nation-state and its relations with other nation-states. The history of high politics and international diplomacy was king. History was made by great men.”<sup>32</sup> Evans proceeds to rightly point out that, “...History has become too diverse for such arguments to stand any chance of damming the new currents in history... Such as social history, cultural history, microhistory,”<sup>33</sup> one could add sports history, history of marriage, and of course history of policing. The specific twist in this thesis is, however, that policing has often been seen only in the context of “history from above” – as an emanation of state history – not from below, from the perspective of police officers themselves and of the ordinary population. Historians have displayed great ingenuity in maximally exploiting unwritten sources to successfully document the history of groups and societies that were considered in academic terms to be ‘preliterate’.<sup>34</sup> Scholarship has thus been the beneficiary of this trend of studying history from different perspectives. It is in these traditions that I situate my work, so my thesis is a departure from history that only focused on those that ‘mattered politically’. It was revealing to realise I was amongst a few researchers who had talked to former NAPF police officers.<sup>35</sup> Some of them were very keen to recount their

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<sup>32</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, 161.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 164.

<sup>35</sup> Another exception is Prof. Kemi Rotimi one of Nigeria’s foremost historians of the police and policing.

experiences for the first time to a researcher. Thus my study is first and foremost an account of the history of policing from below, but also engages in understanding how politics at the top echelons impacts on everyday policing and vice versa. In looking back upon the history of ordinary people, Hobsbawm suggests, “we are not merely trying to give it a retrospective political significance which it did not always have, we are trying more generally to explore an unknown dimension of the past.”<sup>36</sup> The objective is beyond understanding micro and macro trajectories as such, rather it is to analyse the interaction between the two.

The third discussion in this section refers to the relationship between history and the social sciences. E.H. Carr writing in *What is History* notes that “...social scientists and historians are all engaged in different branches of the same study:-the study of man and his environment (social, political etc.) and of the effects of man on his environment and of his environment on man.”<sup>37</sup> In other words the history of historiography is the history of encounters, encounters that have led to productive exchange between history and other disciplines.” Howell and Prevenier have asserted, “...the most important effect of these encounters has been, not on what is studied, but on how historians study it-in short, on what they think they can know and how they think they can know it.”<sup>38</sup> In other words, historians in pursuance of their vocation study a wide range of topics and phenomenon, and employ a much wider variety of methods. There are cases where the subject matter of study benefits from engaging with other disciplines, while still relying on historical approach as the core methodology.

The historical and contemporary salience of the phenomenon of plural policing has led me to adopt a multi-disciplinary approach that draws from history, sociology, anthropology and political economy. This is to account for the origins and changing forms of plural policing, but also to examine the contemporary manifestations of plural policing. Selected ethnographic methods complement the historical methods of data collection. My analytical framework seeks to accommodate useful ideas from the different disciplines that contribute to our understanding of the historical role of policing groups in Plateau State. Using historiographical method, complemented by sociological and ethnographic approaches I attempt a tracking of institutional plurality, specifically as it relates to policing. I have identified three key periods of change in the policing landscape of Nigeria. Post-World War II

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<sup>36</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, *On History*, (London: Abacus, 1997), 270.

<sup>37</sup> E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), 5.

<sup>38</sup> Martha Howell and Walter Prevenier, *From Reliable Sources: An Introduction to Historical Methods*, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 89.

colonial rule and the early post-colonial period; the epoch of local government reforms up to the structural adjustment programme (early 1970s to mid-1980s); the failure of state police and the rise of criminality in the 1980s, and the transition to civilian rule in the late 1990s up to the present.

An ethnographic study of group relations seeks to answer questions relating to the contemporary period. For clarity, my concept of group relations distinguishes between horizontal and vertical ones. Horizontal relations refer to interactions between vigilante groups, and to their functions within the communities, they operate in. Vertical interaction refers to top-down and bottom-up interactions, between vigilante groups and state institutions. A purpose of the extended case method adopted here is understanding the political economy of conflicts in Plateau State since 2001, which has also been relevant in explaining why violence has persisted, and the extent to which plural policing practice, particularly vigilantism, has had an impact on the violence.<sup>39</sup>

### **2.3. Fieldwork: Methods of Data Collection**

My fieldwork period took place in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. This was divided into three main phases: July 2012 – December 2012, August –September 2013, and December 2014 –January 2015. From July –December 2012 I conducted the major field trip in Nigeria. This focus is on Plateau and Kaduna states. Conducting a study about plural policing it became apparent for me quite early that I would require several tools of data collection. In Plateau State, I conducted the bulk of the interviews, and observed vigilante practice. My research visit to Kaduna state entailed a visit to the headquarters of the VGN, located at the Tudun Wada quarter of Kaduna city to interview the national commander general and some of the national executive members of the group. I also conducted research at the National Archives, Kaduna. The National Archives Kaduna holds documents that emanate from the former Northern Region of Nigeria; my research had particular focus on documents related to the former Plateau Province. The second period, August to September 2013 entailed a research trip to the United Kingdom. The objective of this trip was twofold. First, was to meet and interview serving colonial administrative and police officers who had served in Northern Nigeria. Secondly, I conducted research at the British National Archives at Kew, London. The last main research period in the field, was a trip to Plateau State Nigeria from December 2014 – January 2015. The main objective of this trip was to fill in gaps that had emerged following

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<sup>39</sup>See David Keen, *The Economic Functions of Violence in Civil Wars*, Adelphi Paper no.320 (Oxford: Oxford University Press for the International Institute Strategic Studies, 1998), 11.

evaluation of the data. Therefore, the corpus of data, which I have analysed in this study, is from oral interviews, archival research, and notes developed from my observation in the field. The archival data is for historical purposes, and the notes generated from observation have provided specific insight for my understanding of present day plural policing. The data generated from the oral interviews serve as a bridge between the historical and present day analysis of plural policing.

As a rule and from my experiences fieldwork is dynamic and flexible. While one prepares and structures the period, in the field there are so many unexpected occurrences, which can alter and change one's plans. In practice, Von Oppen has observed, "the production of knowledge proceeds through numerous loops as a result of pitfalls and feed-backs. Moreover, it is important to keep in mind that these procedures are part of the researcher's agenda, while the other actors involved in the research pursue different agendas."<sup>40</sup> Therefore, while I had a work plan, and tried to fix appointments with my research informants, on occasion I found myself staying longer in some areas and in other cases spending a shorter period. It was my experience that some individuals pencilled down as important informants turned out not to contribute as much as was expected. Perhaps the best story that illustrates the unexpected and fluid nature of fieldwork is the story of my interview with Mr Danladi Tanglar Wuyep, who was one of the last people I interviewed in January 2015. My interview with Tanglar and the subsequent contacts I got from him changed my core understanding of the role of the NAPF from one of a tool of colonial domination and oppression to a more ambivalent phenomenon.

### **2.3.1. Oral Interviews**

When I commenced planning my pilot trip to the field in October 2011 the focus of my study was to trace the history of vigilantism in Plateau State. After some preliminary interviews in December 2011, it became apparent that the phenomenon I was dealing with was broader than vigilantism. Vigilantism, I came to realise, was a more recent component of a historical phenomenon of plural policing. It emerged that in order to understand the history of this phenomenon I would need to talk to retired and serving police officers. When I returned for the substantive field research, it also became clear that the mediating agent of the transformation from NAPF to the vigilantes of the 1980s and the present VGN were traditional rulers. This meant I had to understand the roles of traditional rulers during the

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<sup>40</sup>Oppen, *Bounding Villages*, 58.

colonial era in administering the native authority. Fortunately, there were former NAPF and NPF officers still alive. Concisely oral testimony has enhanced the richness of the historical narrative and provided interesting perspectives to go along with the archival sources.

Another very important viewpoint I brought into my thesis was the recollection of former colonial administrators and police officers, not just from the archives but from being warmly received into the comfort of their homes and interviewing them in different parts of Britain. On occasion, I confronted them with information I had collected from the archives and from interviews in Nigeria, some directly involving them, others from other remote parts of the colony. It was a very interesting experience for me. At the beginning of an interview with a retired NPF officer in Kent, south-east England, he observed how it was “exciting”, but yet also “disquieting” to be interviewed by a young Nigerian academic, to discuss his experiences as a colonial police officer over forty years after he had left Nigeria.<sup>41</sup> This conditioned my thinking to the extent that I was careful not to come across as aggressive, reproachful and disapproving of his colonial service. I had already imbibed a sense of empathy and a measure of understanding towards former colonial officers. This was because of my engagements with former administrative officers in prior interviews. I had come to realise the difficult experiences former colonial officers had on returning to Britain after the independence of the colony where they served. The challenge narrated to me, showed how these men and their families were returning to a completely different country in contrast to when they left to take up colonial service. The mood of the country as they described it was a country ashamed of its imperial past. As the considered fulcrums of this imperial past, they took the brunt of this collective “shame”. This has since changed. However, as one of these men described it in the late 1960s when he returned his children were teased in school as children of a former colonial officer.<sup>42</sup> Juxtaposing this newfound empathy with my learning on Nigerian colonial history was a difficult process. I questioned whether it was this experience that has tailored me towards writing an ambivalent history of plural policing. at the end I was convinced that the data for the argument of ambivalence emerged more from my interviews, both in Nigeria and Britain, than a moment of common humanity I experienced while talking to former colonial officers. Some of these former colonial officers still depicted the colonial adventure in the light of being a ‘civilising mission.’ I did restrain myself from engaging in debates that

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<sup>41</sup> Robin Mitchell, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 20.08.2013, Kent, UK.

<sup>42</sup> John Smith, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 17.08.2013, Cheltenham, UK.

could have potentially damaged the relationship with the informant, while not changing his opinion and understanding of the colonial era.

In conducting the interviews, I used a semi-structured biographical interview method. This meant I had long periods of discussions and exchanges with my research informants, on topics and issues that had little to do with my research questions. The advantage was I have to know more about the people I was interviewing and their experiences. Furthermore, as I found out the biographic interviews allows the researcher to get an in depth focus into the informant's experiences, as the informant is almost compelled to focus on him/her life. Biographic interviews are not necessarily linear; this is because the narration is centred on what the informant consider as highlights of his/her life. After many days of working with an informant, to the point where he/she has an appreciable understanding of the research focus, the informant becomes a research assistant and guide by default. An instance of this dynamic during my fieldwork was the deputy commander of the VGN Shendam LGA, who at first was an informant but later he became a guide. There were instances at the end of an interview where I would ask him if he had any questions, or lines of inquiry that I did not consider.

In summary, among those interviewed were serving and retired police officers, retired NAPF officers, local government officials, community leaders, women leaders, vigilante group leaders and members of the VGN (serving and retired), traditional rulers, youth leaders, former British colonial officers. I also conducted group interviews with different groups in the communities I studied. This was to identify any inconsistencies and points of similarity, trying to understand what people agree and disagree on. In total, I conducted sixty-four interviews. These interviews varied in length, importance and eventual relevance to the study. I listened back to all of them and transcribed forty-two. I had three categories of transcription. The general interviews, on which I took rough notes and recorded relevant points and opinions. I had twelve interviews in this category. The second category, I termed main interviews, for which I did full transcriptions. There were thirty interviews in this category. Among the thirty after evaluation, twenty-one emerged in a third category of very important interviews. There were some sensitive issues in the interviews and some individuals who asked for anonymity. For such individuals I have used pseudonyms.

Access to respondents was facilitated through various means. In the first instance, after I established my research questions I identified the specific categories or groups and



individuals I wanted to interview. During my exploratory field trip for this study in Plateau State, Nigeria, from December 2011 to January 2012, I made an effort to contact as many informants as possible, make acquaintances and in some cases have preliminary discussions. Phone numbers were exchanged to prepare for my substantive research period July – December 2012. My research assistants were very helpful in obtaining access and introducing me to informants.<sup>43</sup> This was especially very useful in the Muslim communities of Jos, being categorised as a Christian researcher created a sense of suspicion and mistrust. My intention questioned, and was viewed from the lens of the sectarian divide of Jos. I discussed this problem in more detail in a later section of this chapter. As is the case with most researchers who embark on qualitative research, the so-called snowball approach is useful. The moment contact is established with an individual, group, organisation, or institution this often led to another informant, and the process continued until I reached a saturation point. This was particularly relevant for my research interviews with the members of the VGN; my first contact was the local government commander of Langtang North. He linked me up with other local government commanders and the Plateau State officials of the group. It was through these contacts that I secured an appointment with the Commander General of the group leading to a very useful meeting and discussion at the headquarters of the VGN in Kaduna. The decision of which contact to follow up on was determined by the research questions.

### **2.3.2. Observation and Occasional Participation**

Conducting research on the present day manifestations of plural policing required the observation of how plural policing practice is conducted. In chapter eight, I have related accounts of what actually transpired during some selected episodes while I was in the field with members of the VGN on patrol. Observation as a research tool allowed me to witness what the VGN members were doing when they were on patrol. In some cases the VGN patrol with the police, and sometimes on their own. This is sometimes in contrast to interviews. Ethnography is not readily a historian's tool for data collection, however when the objective is to capture the essence of the present-day it is a useful method. Ethnography is the method of choice for Anthropologists, but is required to complement historical research methods.

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<sup>43</sup> Research Assistants are a critical part of fieldwork and gaining access to informants in Nigeria. I worked with the following Research Assistants. Yunus Ibraheem: Hausa community in Jos, for research work in Jos, and access to the Standard Newspapers archives Bulus Gambo was my assistant. For my fieldwork with the VGN in Langtang North, I benefited from the assistance of Julfa Nimmyel and Napkur Kumdong. For the VGN of Shendam Tsenyen Deputy served as my assistant. At the Kaduna archives, Abdullahi Baba served as my research assistant. Finally for my work amongst the VGN in Pankshin LGA Monday Joshua was my research assistant.

There is then the other component of this method, the idea of participating as a tool of understanding the phenomenon or as is done in classical ethnography to cultivate an in-depth understanding of a social group. While one was hesitant to refer to the field experience as participant observation, it should be acknowledge that such instances did occur. The practice of going out on patrol with the VGN members does constitute participant observation, though for the sole purpose of observing, when I go out with the VGN and the police I am already participating in the patrol. I participated and observed VGN patrols in Langtang North 7<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> September, and 4<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> October 2012. In Shendam, I participated and observed night patrols from the 9<sup>th</sup> -16, November. In Pankshin and Kanke LGAs, I observed and participated in patrols from 10<sup>th</sup> -15<sup>th</sup>, December 2012 and 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, January 2015.

There are however scenarios that represent another level of participation. I have two relevant experiences to recount. The first instance was while on patrol with two members of the VGN on a market day in Pankshin town (central Plateau State) in November 2012. The Pankshin Monday market, as the name implies, holds on Mondays and attracts small-scale entrepreneurs from all over Plateau State. The VGN on such a market day patrol in pairs and generally look out for any suspicious behaviour. On this day while they were patrolling, their attention was drawn to two young men suspected of stealing a goat from amongst a herd. The herd belonged to a dealer who buys from markets like Pankshin and sells on to major dealers for onward transportation to southeast Nigeria. The VGN members arrested the two young men, and without the detaining and restraining device of a handcuff, the vigilantes held the suspects by their trousers. As there were only two of them at that point before support arrived they requested me to hold the goat by the rope and we made our way to the office. It occurred to me that in my possession was the stolen property and evidence for the offence. This made me anxious. As we approached the VGN local office to my relief, I handed over the goat and resumed my passive observation role.

The second experience was in Dadur, Langtang North, also in November 2012. In this case, I was observing a VGN recruitment meeting. In attendance were traditional rulers, former vigilante members of the SAP period in the 1980s, a police inspector there to give a lecture on the more finer details of policing work and of course the new recruits. A member of the local youth association, who was taking notes, had to leave the meeting. The manner in which he abruptly left led me to conclude that it was a possible emergency. The point however was that one of the traditional rulers asked if I could continue with taking the minutes of the meeting,

if I do not mind, he requested. While I did have reservations I made effort not to show it, and I continued writing the minutes. As it was in my illegible, field note style handwriting, I had to rewrite before dully submitting. As I have described in my accounts of vigilante patrol and practice in chapters, seven and eight observation presented me with varied experiences. Apart from the joint VGN/Police patrols earlier mentioned, I also observed the practice of mounting road checkpoints by VGN members on the highway connecting the Jos Plateau and the Plateau lowlands in Kanke LGA. I listened to VGN interrogation of suspects in Pankshin, Langtang North, and Shendam LGAs. I observed the performative spectacle of the dance of shame, discussed in more detail in chapter seven. Finally, I observed the weekly VGN parade with a lecture and inspection by the officer in charge of patrol and guard at the divisional police headquarters Langtang north, LGA. All of these experiences, and others not mentioned had a profound consequence on my understanding of contemporary plural policing.

### **2.3.3. The Archives**

To research colonial Nigeria I had to conduct archival research. I conducted this research in two main archives, the National Archives, Kaduna Nigeria and the British Archives, Kew-London. The Department of History, at the Jos University has scanned and digitalised files from the Kaduna and Jos Archives. Therefore, it was instructive to first study the files at Jos before going to Kaduna. I also conducted research at the Rhodes House Library, at Oxford University. The Kaduna Archives is where all documents related to colonial northern Nigeria are preserved. In the Kaduna Archives, the main documents I was interested in were largely colonial correspondences, official letters and memos from district officers, and reports that refer to law and order in the Plateau Province of Northern Nigeria 1940 -1960. At the British Archives I was interested in general files on native administration. This encompassed a broad variety of topics, for instance policy, the ordinance, and jurisdiction.

I was also interested in files on the Nigerian Police Force, and the Native Authority Police Force. Also of interest were Nigerian intelligence reports, particularly reports on internal security of the period from 1945 – 1960. At the Rhodes House Archives in Oxford, I came across a compendium of British Colonial Police Officers Service Memoirs (1940-1960). This contained a wide range of information. There were diaries of police officers, typescripts of interviews with the police officers, and experiences of wives with the colonial service in Nigeria.



**Figure 3:** Researcher in the Nigerian Standard Newspapers Archive, Jos. 11.12.2014.

In approaching and studying archival documents, as all historians are aware archival documents, do not necessarily present a balanced account of the past. Richard Evans aptly notes that:

Archives are the product of the chance survival of some documents and the corresponding chance loss or deliberate destruction of others. They are also the products of the professional activities of the archivist. Archivists have often weeded out records they consider unimportant, while retaining those they consider of lasting value. This might mean for example destroying vast and therefore bulky personnel files on low-ranking state employees such as ordinary soldiers...while keeping room on the crowded shelves for personnel file on high state officials.<sup>44</sup>

An instance of this reality of the historians' tools is experienced on arrival at the British Archives. On arriving at Kew, as part of your orientation you learn two important points regarding how the colonial archives are organised. First, the documents are registered in

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<sup>44</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, 87.

indexes with a list of everything that was sent back to London, organised chronologically. The second point, in relation to the immediate quotation by Evans is the fact that only a selection of five percent (5%) of the original documents are preserved and kept. These are catalogued in files according to subjects. Therefore, one can only imagine how much history has been lost based on the decisions, or simply the lack of space. My archival research was after I had spoken to key informants. Therefore, I already had some themes, concepts, and perspectives I was considering. In the archives, I came across opinions, and views that supported some of my perspectives, but altered others. With archival documents, is not just the text that one considers; also important is an understanding of who wrote it? In what given context – this could be social, political, or legal. In this sense the researcher finds himself in conversation with the archival source, accordingly one cannot claim to “recover a single, unalterably ‘true’ meaning of a dispatch simply by reading it; on the other hand, we cannot impose any meaning we wish to on such a text either.”<sup>45</sup> A document also has meaning in relation to other documents; in this case, the researcher is also interested in what preceded and what follows. Documents are therefore, studied as pieces of a puzzle and there are occasions where the puzzle is not completed and the researcher has to reconsider the line of argument. As I noted previously, when a historian goes to the archives one is not in search of a toolkit of evidence to answer all questions; rather it is a tedious process of reading heaps of documents and trying to make sense of it all. At the end of the process, the archival material complements the process of reconstructing the historical narrative.

## **2.4. Method of Data Analysis: The Extended Case Method**

Having collected the data I found that the task of how to evaluate the amorphous information collected into a sequence of structured and comprehensible narratives, all weaved into a coherent whole was perhaps the most difficult and challenging part of the PhD process. I have deployed two methods in interpreting and analysing the data. First, my approach to change and continuity is situated within a historical approach; I have extrapolated on this in the previous sections of this chapter. To complement the historical approach I have also relied on the extended case method. In sum as Burawoy captures it, “the extended case method applies reflexive science to ethnography in order to extract the general from the unique, to move from the “micro” to the “macro,” and to connect the present to the past in anticipation of the future.”<sup>46</sup> I have argued the method equally seeks to reveal the macro underpinnings of a

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<sup>45</sup> Evans, *In Defence of History*, 106.

<sup>46</sup> Michael Burawoy, “The Extended Case Method” *Sociological Theory* 16, no. 1, (1998), 5.

micro phenomenon. The extended case method therefore helps the researcher to look at micro events and seek to explore the macro phenomenon underlying these processes. The extended case method in this thesis is not a replacement for historical methods of analysis, rather to complement. Burawoy refers to the extended case method as a “methodological duality, the coexistence and interdependence of two models of science – positivist and reflexive.”<sup>47</sup> As he argues in his paper this is conceptualised according to inductive and deductive modes of analysis. Now to be clear, it is important to lay out the extent to which I agree with Burawoy in regards to the coexistence of these methodological traditions. It is my belief that literature review is constitutive of the methodological process, my research process has been deductive to the extent where I considered existing notions of the concepts I identified as central to my study. Understandings of the state and the concept of vigilantism as drawn from existing literature constituted a starting point for my inquiry. I did not go to the field with a clean slate looking to fill it up with meaning and understanding. From my readings I generated perspectives, according to how other scholars had understood these concepts within a Nigerian, African, and broader general understanding. The data generated from my fieldwork is however, the basis of my interpretation and analysis. In this case, I have arrived at conclusions that are in conformity with some scholars I had reviewed, but also my analysis equally disputes several other scholars. The notions and conceptions I generated are a product of my research beginning from my review of literature to the writing of the thesis.

The extended case method as proposed by Burawoy extends the researcher’s scope of inquiry beyond specific context. In Burawoy’s conception, there are four possibilities to draw this extension, namely: extending the observers gaze into the lives of the groups and individuals studied; extending the researchers observation over time and space; extending micro processes to macro forces<sup>48</sup>; and the extension of theory. The extension of theories refers to the extension of understanding and interpreting data aimed at formulating theoretical frameworks. I am particularly interested in the second and the third methods of extension. In my study, I have used the extended case method to understand interrelation between historical processes across the period studied. In this case, the extended case method shares a similarity with the historical approach. The extended case method enables “the exploration of broad historical patterns and macrostructures without relinquishing the contextual narratives and

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>48</sup> I have showed in my thesis how we can also extend from macro process to micro processes, and vice versa.

processes.”<sup>49</sup> At this level, the analysis compiles temporal historical knowledge into an account of social processes from varied historical periods. In relating this to my study it can be argued that the knowledge of the transformation of the chieftaincy institution in post-world war II colonial Nigeria and the consequent establishing of the NAPF set the course of the social processes the thesis has studied – the process of plural policing. By studying the past through oral histories as recounted by individual biographies and archival documents we are able to account for the establishment of plural policing, and understand how policing actors have responded to changing political and social context. We can also track processes of state building through the institutionalisation of plural policing. Secondly, regarding micro to macro extension, and vice versa we are able to understand how reforms and policy changes at the macro state level can release a chain of events and actions at the micro state level, in other words we can study the micro level to draw insight on the macro, and vice versa. Eric Hobsbawm captures this, in an apt analogy:

“...there is nothing new in choosing to see the world via a microscope rather than a telescope. So long as we accept that we are studying the same cosmos, the choice between microcosm and macrocosm is a matter of selecting the appropriate technique. It is significant that more historians find the microscope useful at present, but this does not necessarily mean that they reject telescopes as out of date.”<sup>50</sup>

A study of these interactions lends to insights on the interface between state and society through the lens of plural policing, and the practices of actors at different levels, and across different groups and institutions. Therefore, we are able to extend our understanding across vertical and horizontal connectedness.

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<sup>49</sup> Burawoy, “The Extended Case Method”, 6.

<sup>50</sup> Hobsbawm, *On History*, 253.

## 2.5. Research in a Conflict Context

Arjun Appadurai<sup>51</sup> has shown how historical narratives of the past can be mobilised for political and cultural projects in the present. The past, he argues, becomes a ‘scarce resource’ within contexts of contestation, because cultural understandings of history may differ, records may be thin on the ground, and one particular interpretation of the past or of oral history – e.g. by one clan or ethnic group – may be challenged by another. The right to have traditional-cultural and political suzerainty over Jos, the Plateau State capital, for instance is weaved into competing discourses of autochthony, belonging and ownership. Autochthony as ‘belonging’ according to Geschiere can have a varied meaning among different groups, even when these groups reside within the same given territory. Fourchard and Segatti suggest a departure from a unifying meaning of all xenophobic tendencies. The conceptualisation offered considers synonymous notions “as autochthony, nativism, and indigeneity as local concepts used by actors in situations of xenophobia.”<sup>52</sup> Autochthony is therefore situated within a specific social context of discourse and practice. For some groups the claim to autochthony is based on early settlement, for others they are autochthonous because of conquest, and yet other groups make claim to being autochthonous on the basis of having lived in an area for a given period of time over several generations.<sup>53</sup> As my analysis of vigilantism in the time of sectarian violence in Jos clearly demonstrates, historical narratives about the origins and formation of vigilantism in an area overtaken by sectarian violence can become highly contested.

Secondly, my research experience has also shown that archival research can also be impacted by violent conflict. One may imagine that this may relate to the archives or libraries’ being destroyed, as was the case in Timbuktu, Mali in 2013. That being an important risk, in my case, however, I refer to a different kind of vandalisation. Owing to the fact that some cases of violent sectarian conflicts are weaved around territorial claims to land and autochthony, colonial documents kept at the archives emerge as important sources of evidence to present before judicial commissions of inquiry. Generally, one of government’s responses to recurring episodes of violence have invariably been to institute commissions of inquiry, often headed by legal luminaries, with the mandate of establishing the causes of specific episodes of

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<sup>51</sup> Arjun Appadurai, “The Past as a Scarce Resource”, *Man*, (1981), 201-219.

<sup>52</sup> Laurent Fourchard and Aurelia Segatti, “Introduction of Xenophobia and Citizenship: The Everyday Politics of Exclusion and Inclusion.” In *Africa*, 85, 1, (2015), 2-12, doi: 10.1017/S0001972014000746.

<sup>53</sup> Peter Geschiere, *Pearls of Belonging: Autochthony, Citizenship, and Exclusion in Africa and Europe*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).



violence, identifying the key actors, and proposing remedial measures to prevent future violence. Groups go to the archives in search of evidence to strengthen their claims, but unfortunately, to also vandalise potential evidence that perceived opponents may find useful. At the Kaduna, archives I found the evidence of the visits by ethnic organisations in the Archives register around the period the organisations were preparing their memorandums to submit to the Justice Bola Ajibola Commission of Inquiry that followed the 2010 electoral violence in Jos. For instance at the Kaduna Archives, missing documents include memos on chiefs and their loyalty or the lack of it, minutes of meetings, political activities in Jos in the 1950s, proposals for reorganising divisional, and native authority boundaries. Adoyi, referring to such practice as the malaise of pilfering through stealing of critical and sensitive archival documents identifies some other objectives like attempting to influence chieftaincy disputes, land cases and/or certain damaging intelligence reports compiled about areas as reasons why archival documents are taken.<sup>54</sup> While we may not be able to conclude on whom actually took away these documents, one may suggest it would seem an interesting coincidence that documents missing are related to such areas engulfed in sectarian conflict.

Another challenge that emerged while I was conducting fieldwork was questions of my identity(s) and perceptions of my positionality, and how this is situated within insider-outsider dynamics. Beyond the conflict context, insider-outsider dynamics of a research context have been one of the more discussed aspects of field research. It raises questions like, who is an insider, and who is an outsider? While in one context being an insider could be an advantage, it could equally be a disadvantage in another context, and the same applies to an outsider. This becomes even more acute in a conflict context, as I realised getting access was not just challenging where I was regarded as an outsider but also where I was seen as an insider. Following the several episodes of violence Jos became segregated along religious lines, therefore as a Christian resident of Jos I had to consider if it was safe going into the Muslim quarters of the city for research purposes. The fact that I desired to meet and talk to Muslim vigilante members and groups meant I had to try, but it required caution and good preparation. The challenge was not only that of physical safety, it was also about access – so that people could be in a position, where they trust you and feel free to talk to you. It is difficult to convince that you come without an opposing religious or political predisposition.

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<sup>54</sup> Adoyi F. Onoja, "An Endangered Specie? The State of the Archives in the Reconstruction of Nigerian History," Mike O. Odey, John J. Nengel, and Okpeh O. Okpeh eds. *Historical Research and Methodology in Africa: Essays in Honour of Professor Charles Creswell Jacobs*, (Makurdi: Aboki Publishers, 2010), 109.

The final point is the challenge of observing and witnessing violence as policing practice. How should a researcher approach this problem, as an ethical risk, vital access or as both? When one is researching contemporary vigilante practice a key source of data is observation. While interviews can provide insight into the structures, functions and individual motivations for joining up, observing everyday practice for a sustained period complements and as I learned sometimes contradicts the oral information provided by the vigilante members. Getting access to go around with vigilante groups as they go about their normal daily routines can constitute a challenge on two levels. Vigilante groups work during the day - for instance patrolling local markets – but the main function of guarding is actually at night. In taking the decision to request permission to go out on night patrol, one has to weigh the risks involved; questions of (the researcher's) safety to be considered. In other words when making such a decision – you take the same risk which the vigilantes take. Vigilantes are never certain of the situation that awaits them every night they go out, how armed or dangerous is a potential offender/suspect. When going out on patrol with VGN member as a researcher, all these considerations are also important for the researcher.

The second level entails to what extent will the researcher's presence impact or influence practice. One of the key objectives of observation is to be as inconspicuous as possible, in other words to what extent is one's research partners carrying out their normal daily routine, or is it a case of performance? In my case, the question that emerged was how should I deal with instances of 'violent interrogation' – this to an extent is an ethical dilemma. Should I decline to conduct observational research of vigilante or policing practice, and simply rely on what I am told, should I speak out when I observe that the line is perhaps being crossed, or should I merely observe and basically describe and analyse the practice as experienced. In this case, I refer to Lars Buur, confronted with a similar dilemma Buur decided to witness and analyse it as part of vigilante practice. He notes that "...just because one actually experiences something, (violence) this does not mean one necessarily endorses what one sees and experiences. Sometimes the best way of speaking up against something is by describing it so that others can make their own judgements."<sup>55</sup> Baz Lecocq laments how "positive, and especially negative emotions, within the field at large, and its effects on analysis and writing are scarcely dealt with."<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, commenting on what he described as the open

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<sup>55</sup> Lars Buur, "Domesticating Sovereigns: The Changing Nature of Vigilante Groups in South Africa", in *Domesticating Vigilantism in Africa*, Thomas Kirsch and Tilo Gratz, eds., (James Currey, Suffolk and Rochester, 2010), 47

<sup>56</sup> Baz Lecocq, "Fieldwork ain't always fun: public and hidden discourses on fieldwork", in *History in Africa*, vol.29, (2002), 274.

reluctance and outright denial of the “pain of fieldwork” in favour of the “fieldwork holiday myth” Lecocq, contends “not accounting for all of one’s attitudes in and towards the field in one’s professional life and writing is to some extent cheating both the audience and oneself. It is simply denying one’s own humanity...”<sup>57</sup> It is worth noting that I was working largely in areas I have already lived in or where I am from, thus familiar with the general context. The more serious challenge in regards to access during fieldwork was gaining access to the Muslim side and overcoming any suspicion they may have felt towards me.

One of the major points I came away with was how thin the line is between negotiating these challenges and being stuck in the field bereft of any idea of what to do. In other words despite all these challenges, I would argue that largely I did achieve the objectives of my field research, while still noting that it could have easily gone wrong. Another point to make in conclusion is to perhaps ask the question if our training for field research in conflict zones or conflict context is adequate or still lacking in the manner we are prepared for the realities of such contexts. In any case, we do fieldwork to find out new things, and maybe no matter how we prepare it is still likely that nothing prepares us enough for what we may encounter. Patrick Peritore argues the process of embedding oneself into the context of research requires one to become ‘street wise’, context knowledge and understanding must supersede ideological and cultural assumptions.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 275.

<sup>58</sup> N.P. Peritore, “Reflections on dangerous fieldwork”, in *American Sociologist* 21, 4, (1990), 370.

## **Chapter Three: Conceptual Framework**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the conceptual framework on which the main arguments of the thesis are anchored. The conceptual framework is formulated based on two categories: The first category is the institutional context, which refers to the Nigerian state (local government and police) and policing institutions, like the NAPF and the VGN. The second category of concepts relates to the relational context. Plurality and authority are deployed in this thesis to provide the basis for understanding the relational dynamics of the empirical context. Starting with the first category on a broader general level my study is within the scope of state-society relations in Africa. The state here refers to the Nigerian state understood through its constituent parts, such as the police and local government administration. Society in this case refers to vigilante groups and the communities where they operate. It is also important to make clear that in this chapter I do two things. Firstly, I review relevant literature and situate my thesis within existing debates. Secondly, I outline the concepts I have used and situate them within my empirical context.

In my understanding of the state and vigilantism, I have three levels of analysis. The first level is around debates on the state in Africa. My review and entry into these debates is historical. I engage with the concept of the state and extrapolate on what my thesis gains from such discourses. The second level is on the Nigerian state. In this section, I engage critically with the existing literature on the Nigerian state. I then proceed to show the approaches which have been used to understand the Nigerian state, and how my understanding of the Nigerian state, from my study of plural policing in Plateau State, adds to the existing literature. I then engage with the concept of vigilantism, starting with a brief narration of the origins of the concept and its usage, illustrated with some cases of how vigilantism has been studied and analysed by Africanist scholars. I analyse the literature on Nigerian vigilantism, showing how the main existing gaps are found in the scope – periodization and parts of Nigeria that have not received scholarly attention, and I show how I conceptualise and understand vigilantism within my research context.

The chapter then proceeds to the second category of concepts, plurality and authority. These concepts help us understand the relational dynamic between state and society. This is particularly relevant for our understanding of the relationship between the police and vigilante groups.

Plurality and authority help us to see beyond the dichotomy of state and society, beyond the idea that the police and vigilante are constantly in opposition; rather I have used these concepts to show how they are cross cutting and overlapping. I argue that my conceptualisation of plurality is a form of institutionalised pluralism. I then proceed to show how plurality is relevant and domesticated within the analysis of my case study. In the last section of the chapter, I show how I have built the framework around the concept of authority- this is preceded by a discussion of the genealogy of the concept and a brief history of usage.

In sum, the literature on the state, policing, and vigilantism was important for the formulation of the research problem, secondly I conducted a literature review as a prelude to identifying contextual gaps and to develop my conceptual categories. These literatures were also relevant during the process of evaluating and interpreting data. The last point here is to acknowledge how such scholarly contributions also constituted perspectives, which I reanalysed and reinterpreted. It is the vocation of the historian as it were to first establish that certain events or processes did occur then proceed to analyse what it might mean. In this sense, I have considered the published work of other historians and I have used existing literature and referred to particular events as described and narrated by other historians. The point of departure therefore is in a reinterpretation of such material. With a careful, critical re-reading, we can shed new light and understandings of phenomenon. When we ask different questions, we emerge with different arguments. Relying on insights generated from my data I then attempt to situate my study within these debates showing points of convergence and divergence. The complementary dialectic between the existing literature reviewed and data generated from fieldwork creates the basis for my framework, and subsequently a historical and contemporary understanding of vigilantism, and on a broader frame plural policing, as the basis of understanding state society relations. This is the basis of my case study. I will proceed to argue that what is lacking in the literature is a historical sociology of vigilantism.

### **3.2 The State in Africa**

The conceptual understanding of the state within this thesis is derived from the existing literature on the post-colonial African state; the legacies of its colonial past and the contradictions of its post-colonial history,<sup>59</sup> particularly as it relates to the provision of

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<sup>59</sup> Claude Ake, "The Future of the State in Africa," *International Political Review*, 6, 1, (1985), and Claude Ake, *Democracy and Development in Africa* (Washington DC: Brookings Institution, 1996), 3-6. Also, see Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, (Princeton Studies in Culture, Power, and History, (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1996), 37-62.

security. In other words, I am interested in how scholars have understood the state in Africa from historical lens but also contemporary insights are equally of relevance. Specifically the problematization of the colonial state, and the legacies bequeathed to the successor state.

Though discredited and no longer in vogue as a basis of understanding the state in Africa, it is instructive to recapture the historical contentions made by the modernisation theory and the dependency school in understanding the place of colonialism in the development of the state in Africa. The modernisation theory was situated within the poles of transition from 'tradition' to 'modern'. One of its major proponents W.W Rostow writing within a cold war context was keen to sell the Euro-American capitalist system as the system that can emancipate 'traditional' societies.<sup>60</sup> Other Modernisation theorist picked on Rostow's arguments, colonialism was understood as a stage in Africa's developmental process, and the African elites were rendered as critical agents that will drive an Africanist modernist transformational agenda.<sup>61</sup> In this cold war context, African states were encouraged, cajoled and sometimes forced to adopt western institutional models as the only means that will drive the transitional process.

The dependency school which emerged largely in response to the modernisation school built their arguments on showing how Africa has been on the losing side of a long historical relationship with Europe and North America. For the dependency school the stages of development and underdevelopment were two sides of the same coin,<sup>62</sup> Europe is developed because Africa is underdeveloped and Africa is underdeveloped because Europe is developed. They argued that colonialism constituted one stage in the process of hindering Africa's developmental process. Dependency scholar's main argument was that the condition of the African 'neocolony' was because of how African states had been exploited, externally by the different stages of imperialism and internally by African 'petty' or 'comprador' bourgeoisie.<sup>63</sup> The conceptualisations framed along 'global systems' failed to adequately capture the transformations unfolding across the African political and social landscape.

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<sup>60</sup> W.W. Rostow, *Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1960)

<sup>61</sup> See Richard Sklar, *Nigerian Political Parties: Power in an Emergent African Nation*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963) and A.F.K. Organski, *The Stages of Political Development*, (New York: Knopf, 1965)

<sup>62</sup> Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, (Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House, 1972)

<sup>63</sup> Samir Amin, *Neocolonialism in West Africa*, (London: Penguin, 1973) and Claude Ake, *Revolutionary Pressures in Africa*, (London: Zed Press, 1978)

In more contemporary scholarship there has been a shift from using western models as the basis of understanding the state in Africa. Rajeev Bhargava for instance interrogates the analytical value that political concepts like the state may have in the post colony, Bhargava asks:

How valuable is the concept of the state outside the context where it originated? In particular, what is its usefulness in India [or Nigeria]? Does it illuminate our social and political reality? Does it obstruct us from a proper understanding of how we should view ourselves?<sup>64</sup>

In their influential work *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, Aradhana Sharma and Akhil Gupta make a critical point about the need to shift in the way the state can be studied, they argue that scholars should consider approaching the study of the state by looking at its constituted and (un)constituted practices and the way these practices are encountered.<sup>65</sup> The unfolding scholarship still however made attempt to draw continental patterns of analysis. This has produced some interesting insight, accompanied by notions that set out to capture the African condition: social, political and economic. Some prominent examples of these conclusions include the state as a site of ‘prebendal practice’,<sup>66</sup> extrapolated as ‘the politics of the belly’.<sup>67</sup> The African state has also been described as a harbinger of mismanagement and squandered opportunities, suffering the ailment of ‘resource curse’.<sup>68</sup> The state has also been described as the perpetrator of ‘criminality’.<sup>69</sup> These conclusions do constitute part of the African reality. However, we should recognise that they represent a part of the reality. My approach to understanding the state is inspired by a methodological consideration that embraces the category of ambivalence. I seek to extrapolate on this category in the following section in specific reference to the Nigerian state.

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<sup>64</sup> R. Bhargava and Helmut Reifeld, eds. *Civil Society and the Public Sphere: Dialogues and Perceptions*, (New Delhi: Sage, 2005)

<sup>65</sup> A. Sharma and A. Gupta, “Introduction” in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* A. Sharma and Akhil Gupta, eds. (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2006)

<sup>66</sup> Richard Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The rise and fall of the second republic*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987)

<sup>67</sup> Jean-François Bayart, *The State in Africa: The politics of the belly*, (London and New York: Longman, 1993)

<sup>68</sup> Paul Collier, “The Political Economy of Natural Resources” *Social Research*, 77, 4, (2010) 1105-1132.

<sup>69</sup> Jean-François Bayart, Stephen Ellis, and Beatrice Hibou, *The Criminalisation of the state in Africa*. (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

### 3.3 The Nigerian State

For ease of analysis, I examine the literature on the Nigerian state in its pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial formations. I am interested in understanding how scholars have deployed usage of the concept of the state to provide insight into the historical and contemporary socio-political landscape of the Nigerian context. Joel Migdal notes that “...while the state may occupy a privileged place in our collective thinking, its empirical reality in large parts of the world is much more complex.”<sup>70</sup> On one extreme is to measure the state in Africa on the yardstick of a Weberian ideal type, the state that has presence, authority and reach. On the other extreme is the weak state, unable to govern its territory and people in a meaningful way. My interest and approach in understanding the Nigerian state is captured by the category of ambivalence. This category is given meaning by converging three different framings of the state in Africa: the state at work; the state as a producer of abjection; and the state as idea.

The notion of the state as a producer of abjection is drawn from the analysis how Nigerians encounter the state. Taking a lead from Sharma and Gupta<sup>71</sup>, Wale Adebawo and Ebenezer Obadare<sup>72</sup>, attempt to answer specific questions on how different agents and actors encounter the Nigerian state, and what are their understandings of it? What do people think of the state? Is the state seen as hindrance or as a facilitator, or neither of the two? What are the different spaces of encounter, formal and non-formal, anticipatory and participatory? How do people’s experiences determine their understanding of the character of the state? In other words it is important to also define the state by looking at it through the lens of its citizens, the potential and actual assumptions of what the state is, is hopefully made clear. Their conclusion frames the Nigerian state as one that creates abjection.

My departure from the formulation of Adebawo and Obadare is to consider an emic encounter of the state. In other words, encountering can also be from the inside, not just the outside. Bierschenk and Olivier De Sardan use the metaphor of states and public services as a working site, an ongoing construction site. They “proceed from the premise that processes of state formation in Africa were not completed once and for all with the establishment of the colonial states, with the achievement of the independence of these countries, or with the

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<sup>70</sup> Joel Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-society relations and state capabilities in the third world*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 15.

<sup>71</sup> Sharma and Gupta, *The Anthropology of the State*.

<sup>72</sup> Wale Adebawo and Ebenezer Obadare, eds., *Encountering the Nigerian State*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 3.



recent emergence of democratic (and civil) regimes.”<sup>73</sup> They however do not limit this argument to African states, they contend that “ If one considers, from a Weberian perspective, the institutionalisation of violence, the local anchoring of central power and the self-limitation of the rulers qua codification of the law as the core of the development of the modern Western-type state, state building processes are never ending.”<sup>74</sup> Their main point – characteristics like incompleteness, fragility, and reversibility are universal features of state-building processes. Our task therefore is to identify how these dynamics manifest in specific state context and in particular institutional settings.

The third aspect of the category of ambivalence is the concept of the state as an idea, what Till Foster<sup>75</sup> refers to as the imagination of the state. He draws insight from his study of a specific historical situation of northern Cote d’Ivoire; where the state as an institution with the capacity of coercion has generally evaporated but the imagination of its practices persist. A similar scenario is replicated in my study context; this is particularly in rural settings where the imagination of the state as a guarantor of law and order existed before certain particular vigilante groups began to be active.

### **3.3.1 The Colonial State**

The indirect system contributed in entrenching institutional hierarchies, the institution of the Native Authority being at the bottom of this hierarchy. Among the societies of southern Plateau State, the colonial transformation of the chieftaincy institution became a critical turning point. The Nigerian colonial state was amongst other things built and sustained on the objectives of maximising economic benefit for the colonial metropolis. To achieve the exploitation of resources there was a particular fixation with maintaining law and order. The socio-political policies of the colonial government had economic objectives. The colonial system of indirect rule allowed the colonial state to cut the cost of administration by using local chiefs as proxies for the colonial state. In the Middle Belt however, there were two levels of mediation. The people were not just dealing with local chiefs; they were also dealing with Hausa imperial agents. The institutionalisation of “Native Alien” Subcolonialism by the

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<sup>73</sup> Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Olivier De Sardan, “Studying the Dynamics of African Bureaucracies. An Introduction to States at Work,” in *States at Work. Dynamics of African Bureaucracies*, Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Olivier De Sardan, eds. (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 7.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Till Foster, *Statehood in a Stateless Society: Political Order and Societal Memory in Northern Cote d’Ivoire*, *Basel Papers on Political Transformations*, No.4, (2012), 8-9.

British amongst the Middle Belt groups of Nigeria is excellently analysed in Ochuno's<sup>76</sup> *'Colonialism by Proxy: Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle Belt Consciousness in Nigeria.'* Ochuno conceptually and empirically shows us how it is possible to go beyond the European colonizer/African colonized binary. The book shows how the instituting of Hausa political structures amongst the peoples of the Middle Belt violated the core rationale of the indirect rule system in Northern Nigeria. Ochuno extensively shows how "Hausa subcolonial rule was intellectually packaged, rationalized, and justified against the suffocating backdrop of British obsessions with the tenets of indirect rule, especially the cardinal idea of indigenous mediation."<sup>77</sup> In analysing the phenomenon of 'Hausanisation of Policing Practice' in the former Plateau Province, I have found the notion of 'Colonialism by Proxy' very useful

Mahmood Mamdani has argued that the post-colonial struggle to entrench democratic rule in Africa, particularly the rural landscape - has a causal link to how African colonies were administered. He argues that the colony was administered through a bifurcated system; the post-colonial ruling elite maintained a decentralised despotism rather than being dismantled. What Mamdani has referred to as 'decentralized despotism',<sup>78</sup> a regime of institutional differentiation characterized by a bifurcated system with two forms of power used to govern 'colonial subjects'. Urban power was predicated on the language of civil society and civil rights – the rights of the colonizers. Community and culture, ethnic groups reconstituted as Native Authorities administered by customary law, on the other hand characterized rural power. A thread that runs through the foregoing conceptions of the conditions of the African state is how these notions attribute some transformational value to the colonial state. For the modernisation theorist it was a stage in Africa's developmental process, for the dependency school it was a stage in the process of Africa's exploitation, for 'decentralised despotism' colonialism through its governing system created rural despots whose main objective was the furtherance of the objectives of the colonial project. Mamdani's core argument therefore is that, we are in a better position to understand the present predicament and challenges of instituting democratic rule when we consider how the colony and the predecessor post-colonial state have been administered.

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<sup>76</sup> Moses E. Ochunu, *Colonialism by Proxy: Hausa Imperial Agents and Middle Belt Consciousness in Nigeria*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2014).

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. P.x.

<sup>78</sup> Mamdani, *Citizens and Subjects*, 8 and 17.

While rights governed citizens, subjects were governed indirectly through a range of different arrangements. Under the system, most of the colonial population were subjects because the status they had was generally derived from a putative customary law which colonialism used in order to compel Africans into the commodity chain of imperial capitalism. Citizenship was reserved for colonial officers and the few who were at their service. Africans (in this specific case Nigerians) were subjects of the colonial state but also subject to its discipline via so-called custom and tradition. It is my intention to argue that in societies like those in my case study area the impact of this bifurcated system was much more acute: it was not just the institution of the paramount chief that was foreign but the people were equally subjected to ruler-ship under a native authority system with its own policing arm, which at its inception was constituted primarily to protect the state and its agents. In an attempt to understand the processes and dynamics that characterised the socio-political transformation of these societies in the colonial and post-colonial context, I contend that, though important and useful, we would need to go beyond the frame of decentralised despotism. While Mamdani's<sup>79</sup> notion of 'decentralised despotism' captures the core essence of the systems of colonial governance, the making of traditional authority in Africa could not only be captured by its capacity of coercion. It is much more ambivalent than that.

Building on this notion of ambivalence, von Oppen observes that colonial state making was beset by a series of very specific contradictions. These contradictions are equally important for my understanding of the colonial state. Referring to contradictions and tensions partly created by 'decentralised despotism'<sup>80</sup> von Oppen observes, "It was not uncommon for this tension to permeate comparable instruments of territorial rule, such as census-taking, identity documents or boundary demarcation."<sup>81</sup> These tensions one may note still permeate the contemporary governing practices of the Nigerian state, issuance of identity documents has for instance become bureaucratized, but citizens as Fourchard has argued have found creative patron-client practices to side step the process.<sup>82</sup> A second contradiction, according to von Oppen is that of locality and mobility. The colonial drawing of boundaries was presented as civilizing mission, a struggle against mobility. "On the other hand, colonialism itself was a

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<sup>79</sup> Mamdani, *Citizens and Subjects*, 17.

<sup>80</sup> On one hand, the colonial system was a strategy of totalization in the way it converged groups into territorial spaces, and on the other hand, it instituted systems of fragmentation, - indigenes and non-indigenes, natives and strangers.

<sup>81</sup> Oppen, *Bounding Villages*, 44.

<sup>82</sup> Laurent Fourchard, "Bureaucrats and indigenes: Producing and bypassing certificates of origin in Nigeria" *Africa*, 85, 1, (2015), 37-58.

highly unsettling endeavour that demanded and frequently forced subject populations to move in large numbers over considerable distances.”<sup>83</sup> Again, we find enduring legacies of such practices in contemporary Plateau State.<sup>84</sup>

It is my contention that we need to deploy our inquiry beyond the colonial state, its intentions and its policy. Of more importance is the implementation and what becomes of it. As Thomas Spear<sup>85</sup> has aptly argued, the more we are drawn to suggestions that British colonisers and African ethno-political entrepreneurs were responsible for reconceptualising tradition, custom or ethnicity, the more we are drawn to disembodied ideas of invention. Thus, agency must be seen as a function of discourse as people debate issues of the present in terms of ideas and beliefs drawn from the past, reformulating them and revising them in the context of the present. Where transitions occur, ideas, beliefs and practices that resonate with current concerns are therefore adapted, and those that do not are rendered immaterial, or simply expire.

A second point is captured in Fredrick Cooper’s critique of Mamdani’s notion of decentralised despotism. Cooper is interested in how processes unfold, rapture, and recreate new histories. According to Cooper, there are convincing points in Mamdani’s analysis of colonial administration in the 1920s and 1930s – of administering the colony through traditional rulers and the causal link to the contemporary challenges of deepening democratic practice in Africa with particular reference to the 1980s and the 1990s. It does however become challenging, when such an attempt is made without rigorously detailing the historical trajectory. This ‘ahistorical’ vocation Cooper refers to as ‘leap frogging.’ “Claiming that something in time A caused something in time C without considering time B, which lies in between.”<sup>86</sup> Cooper writes that while:

“Mamdani has a point at either end of his leapfrog, but he misses what lies in between. His book says almost nothing about the 1950s and the 1960s, and thus does not consider another dimension of Africa’s malaise: that there was indeed effective mobilization in those years that cut across ethnic and urban/rural distinctions. Through such mobilizations Africans made strong

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<sup>83</sup> Oppen, *Bounding Villages*, 44.

<sup>84</sup> The tin on the Plateau became very critical to the British war effort after the loss of the Malaya tin mines to the Japanese in early 1942. Subsequently, the colonial government made efforts to step up production. This entailed mobilisation of people from across the northern region to the Jos mines.

<sup>85</sup> Thomas Spear, “Neo-Traditionalism and the limits of invention in British Colonial Africa”, *The Journal of African History*, 44, no. 1, (2003), 3-27.

<sup>86</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 17.

claims to citizenship...The explosion of citizenship in the final years of colonial rule appears nowhere in Mamdani's book."<sup>87</sup>

Cooper points out how in failing to analytically relate to what transpired in the 1950s and 1960s Mamdani misses a critical period in the historical trajectory of the decolonisation era. Furthermore, Mamdani fails to capture the tragic dilemma of how the African populace's exciting response to the futuristic projects of the political class was eventually dashed by an unfolding landscape of dashed promises and squandered opportunities. The analysis it seems, adequately provides this missing bridge between Mamdani's period of 'decentralised despotism' and the failed politics of the 1990s. I have used 'decentralised despotism' to understand the role, which traditional rulers played in the practice of plural policing and the institutionalisation of vigilantism. I have however, problematised the role of traditional rulers beyond mere agents of colonialism and its oppressive tendencies. The fact that these institutions of chieftaincy have not only survived but have taken a new lease in Nigeria's contemporary socio-political formation,<sup>88</sup> requires us to understand not just the contemporary state but more important the processes across historical trajectories. To address the relationship of past and present we have to also interrogate and understand how processes have unfolded over time.

### **3.3.2 The Post-Colonial State**

Achille Mbembe's<sup>89</sup> conceptualisation of the post-colonial African state 'the postcolony' is a fusion of the discourses and actual political economic practices that characterised the state in Africa. With a particular focus on Cameroon, his points resonate with other African countries. I find his analysis useful on two specific accounts. Mbembe though not the first, but perhaps with additional clarity and analytical insight, argues that the hegemony of the colonial state was constructed, entrenched and sustained by violence. This violence came in different forms; there was the physical violence of subjugation and suppression as referred earlier. Additionally, the conquered had to be rendered as a 'native' who was desirous of 'civilising' from a 'barbaric' to a 'moral' state of 'existence', he/she was robbed of dignity so as to prepare the way for exploiting his/her (bodily) labour. In the postcolony in context (Nigeria) again as referred to earlier the institutions of violence were maintained and used as tools the state deploys to achieve the political and economic objectives of colonial governing.<sup>90</sup> The

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>88</sup> Adam Higazi and Jimam Lar, "Articulations of Belonging: The Politics of Ethnic and Religious Pluralism in Bauchi and Gombe States, North-East Nigeria". *Africa*, 85, 1, (2015), 103-130.

<sup>89</sup> Achille Mbembe, *On the Post colony* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001)

<sup>90</sup> Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, 42.

socio-political impact of structural adjustment as prescribed by the Bretton Woods Institutions, resulting in the withdrawal of state services and its resulting challenges are also covered in Mbembe's analysis of the postcolony.

I argue that the re-emergence of vigilantism in Plateau State and indeed other parts of Nigeria during the late 1980s can be attributed to the implementation of structural adjustment and the subsequent withdrawal of state funding from the police force.<sup>91</sup> Mbembe<sup>92</sup> argues that even the political turbulence that accompanied the democratic transitions that swept the African continent in the 1990s could not bring positive change, subsequently leading to uncontrolled violence with public and private actors involved. Here his contribution to the debate on the privatization of violence is instructive. He then focuses on what he refers to as the "private indirect government" and demonstrates how the role of the state as an institution for public good has been undermined.

In this context, as I have argued in reference to vigilante socialisation, vigilantes are socialised to understand laws and customs of state practice for policing. The socialisation into the workings of the state also comes along with the skills of avoiding its inhibition. In a society where as Ekeh<sup>93</sup> would argue corruption is celebrated as access to a 'proverbial' national cake, vigilantism does not exist in a different context. The tools of legitimation and authority are thus maximised towards achieving political economic functions.

My empirical understanding of constituted state practices is particularly influenced by Peter Ekeh's<sup>94</sup> seminal notion of 'two publics' in Nigeria. On one hand is the 'primordial' public defined on the lines of group identity and belonging, the 'primordial' public puts obligations on its citizens and expects of them to give and contribute to its progress, even if this means taking away from the civic public. On the other hand then is the civic public, which gives to all citizens but gets very little in return. As Ekeh puts it 'while the individual seeks to gain from the civil public, there is no moral urge on him to give back to the civic public in return for his benefits. Duties, that is, are de-emphasized while rights are squeezed out of the civic

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<sup>91</sup> See Laurent Fourchard, 'A New Name for an Old Practice: Vigilantes in South-Western Nigeria', *Africa* 78, 1, (2008), 16-40.

<sup>92</sup> Mbembe, *On the Post colony*, 67-68 and 82-84.

<sup>93</sup> Peter Ekeh, 'Colonialism and the two publics in Africa: a theoretical statement,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17, 1, (1975), 91-112.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

public with the amorality of an artful dodger'<sup>95</sup>. Ekeh, sees this process as somehow within a logic of dialectics – between the civic and the primordial. The law of this dialectic thereof is the understanding that it is legitimate to rob the civic public in order to strengthen the primordial public. I have used Ekeh's insightful conception to interrogate the dynamics of the relationships between the Nigerian state (police) and the citizens the police are expected to serve. A historical understanding of how the two publics evolved helps us understand why the Nigerian state has found it daunting to ensure the security of citizens and the protection of property.

### **3.4 Police and policing: conceptual clarifications**

For a long period, scholarly thinking about policing has been examined with a state-centred lens. This thinking largely rested on the assumption generated from the sociology of Max Weber. The argument being that one of the defining features of the modern sovereign state is its monopoly of legitimate force within given spatial boundaries, a monopoly that is principally vested – with regard to internal threats to security in the dedicated, uniformed institution we have come to know as the police.<sup>96</sup> While this thinking emerged, in studies that focused on police practice in Western Europe and North America it has equally been influential in studies of policing in other context around the world. In the context of my inquiry, (the Nigerian context) there have been several scholarly contributions on police forces in Nigeria from the origins of colonialism in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the present that have approached the study of policing within this lens; these have emerged from the disciplinary stables of historians, sociologists, and anthropologists. Of significant note are the contributions of Tamuno,<sup>97</sup> Ahire<sup>98</sup> already mentioned, and Rotimi<sup>99</sup> all three are particularly important on the discourse of the early origins and development of the Nigeria Police force. Alemika<sup>100</sup> has equally contributed a significant body of work on the challenges of policing in

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<sup>95</sup> Ekeh, 'Colonialism and the two publics', 107.

<sup>96</sup> Ian Loader, 'Plural Policing and Democratic Governance', *Social and Legal Studies*, 9: 3, (2000), 325.

<sup>97</sup> Tekena Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria, 1861-1985*, (Ibadan University Press, 1970).

<sup>98</sup> Philip T. Ahire, *Imperial Policing*, (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991).

<sup>99</sup> Kemi Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State: The Nigerian experience*, (Ibadan: College Press, 2001).

<sup>100</sup> E.E.O. Alemika, "Policing and Perceptions of Police in Nigeria", *Police Studies*, 11, 4, (1988), 161-176., "Colonialism, State and Policing in Nigeria", *Crime, Law and Social Change* 20, (1993), 187-219., "Police, Policing and the Rule of Law in Transitional Countries," in *Human Rights and the Police in Transitional Countries*, Lone Lindholt, Paulo de Mesquita, Danny Titus, and Etannibi Alemika, eds. (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2003) and, *Disorders and Transformations of the Nigerian Criminal Justice System*, (Inaugural Lecture, no.30, delivered at the University of Jos, Nigeria), 27 July 2006.

contemporary Nigeria. Finally also of importance is Olly Owen's<sup>101</sup> excellent emic ethnography of police practice in contemporary Nigeria. My entry point and departure from these existing studies of policing is embedded in my approach of understanding vigilantism as a constituted part of a plural policing landscape. This study attempts a broader understanding of what Hills<sup>102</sup> calls the 'police system' where she describes it as "an organisation made up of groups and individuals, existing for a specific purpose, employing systems of relatively structured activity with an identifiable boundary, and driven by actors pursuing their own goals according to their own incentives and calculations".<sup>103</sup> As I understand it, Hills' focus here is the national force, the state police in its varied manifestations. However, with the present institutionalisation of civil organisations into policing practice our reference to a 'police system' has to be broader. As Alemika and Chukwuma rightly note, there is a need to delineate two interrelated concepts. By police, we refer to state agencies charged primarily with the enforcement of criminal law and maintenance of order. In an analytical sense, policing refers to measures and actions taken by a variety of institutions and groups (formal and informal) in society to regulate social relations and practices in order to secure the safety of members of the community.<sup>104</sup> Johnston has suggested that the history, structure, and organisation of criminal justice can be conceptualised along the categories of public vs private, formal and informal, and central versus local.<sup>105</sup> It is generally accepted that diverse networks of commercial bodies, voluntary and community groups, individual citizens, national and local governmental regulatory agencies, as well as the public police deliver policing in many country contexts around the globe.<sup>106</sup> Therefore, while non-state policing forms may not have the statutory backing of legal state frameworks, through their practices we can observe how they become part of the 'police system'.

Around the world, plural policing manifests in different forms and guises. As Loader has argued, it could be through private policing forms secured through government; it can also be transitional police arrangements taking place above government; to markets in policing and

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<sup>101</sup> Oliver Owen, *The Nigerian Police Force: an institutional ethnography*, (D.Phil., Thesis, Anthropology, 2013), University of Oxford.

<sup>102</sup> Alice Hills, *Policing Africa: Internal Security and the Limits of Liberalization*, (Boulder & London, Lynne Rienner Publications, 2000), 10.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 10-11. Hills takes this definition from Daft's definition of Organisation. R. Daft, *Organization: Theory and Design* (St Paul, MN: West, 1992), 9.

<sup>104</sup> E.E.A Alemika and I.C. Chukwuma, *Analysis of Police and Policing in Nigeria*, CLEEN Foundation, Justice Sector Reform, 3.

<sup>105</sup> Les Johnston, *The Rebirth of Private Policing*, (New York: Routledge, 1992), 6.

<sup>106</sup> Trevor Jones and Tim Newburn, eds. *Plural Policing: A Comparative Perspective*. (London and New York, Routledge, 2006), 1.



security services unfolding beyond government; and also policing activities engaged in by institutions organised by citizens alongside government.<sup>107</sup> Through its practices, vigilantism<sup>108</sup> has changed the way we think of policing at least in a Nigerian context, but police practice has also changed vigilante practice, the interaction has created a certain kind of symbiotic interpenetration. This I argue has to be embraced not just as current practice but also as the future of policing. Therefore, the history of vigilante practice is better understood when we equally track the history of the Nigerian police. In studying policing solely within the boundaries of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), I argue that a substantive category of policing is left out. The approach in this thesis understands vigilantism as a relational phenomenon, i.e. vigilantism studied in relation to the state; and the core state institution that is often in interaction with vigilante groups is the police.

To understand the relationship between the police and vigilante groups we turn to scholarly works that focus on the relationships and interactions between state and non-state actors in relation to administrative, law and order, and security functions. They refer to ‘twilight institutions’<sup>109</sup>, ‘polycephaly’<sup>110</sup>, and ‘heterarchy’<sup>111</sup> multi-choice policing<sup>112</sup>, for instance, enriching our understanding of a phenomenon which is characterised by cooperation, co-option, and in some cases conflict. Understood collectively, the notions of ‘polycephaly’, ‘twilight institutions’, ‘multi-choice policing’ and ‘heterarchy’ demonstrate that in the fields of governing security and local order, state actors and state codes (law) are merely a category of actors amongst others. Therefore, it is critical to understand, how security is locally conceptualised – in a broad sense within the spatial area I have, studied security is about protection against local crime and personal security, protection of property, like livestock and access to justice and resolution of public disputes.<sup>113</sup> Such matters concern people on a day-to-day basis. We only gain a deeper understanding when we identify the multiplicity of actors

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<sup>108</sup> Over the years, the concept of vigilantism has had quite a negative connotation; here I use it as a category of non-state policing.

<sup>109</sup> Christian Lund, *Twilight Institutions: Public Authority and Local Politics in Africa*, (Blackwell Publishing, 2007)

<sup>110</sup> See Thomas Bierschenk and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardin, “Local Powers and a distant state in rural Central African Republic”, in *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 30, no.97, (1997), 441-468, and Thomas Bierschenk, “Powers in the Village: Rural Benin between democratisation and decentralisation” in, *Africa*, 73, (2003) 145 - 173.

<sup>111</sup> Georg Klute, and Birgit Mballo, *The Problem of Violence: Local Conflict Settlement in Contemporary Africa*, Topics in interdisciplinary African Studies, vol. 21, (Rudiger Koppe Verlag, 2011)

<sup>112</sup> Baker, Bruce *Multi-Choice Policing in Africa*, (Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2008), 6.

<sup>113</sup> Funmi Olonisakin; Eka Ikpe; and Paschal Badong, *The Future of Security and Justice for the Poor: A ‘Blue Sky’ Think-Piece*, (CSDG Policy Studies, no. 21, 2009), 13.

and the varied processes of negotiation that are constantly in motion.<sup>114</sup> Additionally, in order to understand insecurity in Africa, one needs to contextualize the state as all encompassing, by looking at the form and function of the state and the politics, which it creates.<sup>115</sup> My empirical inquiry is interested in overlaps, multiplicities, divergent and convergent patterns of practice and relationships between various actors.

On the one hand, when non-state security and justice actors are excluded, a major part of the security sector is left unaccounted for. On the other hand, the challenge for international organisations and Nigerian governments has been a cautionary and withdrawn engagement with non-state actors for fear of obvious risks that this entails.

### **3.4.1 The Nigeria police: An Introduction**

The origins and establishment of the Nigerian police force as an institution of colonial governance is best understood within the context of the indirect rule policy. Given the character of colonial rule, police forces were the instrument used to sustain alien domination. As it relates to the security roles, the structure of what was then the colonial police force critically shaped the relationship between the state and society in colonial and then post-colonial Nigeria. The goal was to overcome the legitimacy crisis and to achieve the extractive, accumulation and taxation objectives of the colonial state. The colonial state, its legitimacy crisis and its preoccupation with 'law and order' threw up a specific state structure, state personnel and institutions to achieve these objectives.<sup>116</sup>

According to Ahire, the function of colonial policing through the enactment of ordinances and laws extended state authority not through persuasion, but by coercively compelling obedience.<sup>117</sup> He argues that colonial policing adopted two major forms, militaristic and civil policing. Ahire writes that militaristic policing:

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<sup>114</sup> Dieter Neubert, "Competing Orders and the Limits of Local Forms of Socio-Political Organisation", in *The Problem of Violence: Local Conflict Settlement in Contemporary Africa*, Georg Klute and Birgit Embalo, eds., (Rudiger Koppe Verlag, 2011), 49-68

<sup>115</sup> This approach has been developed in, Mustapha, et al., (forthcoming November 2015) 'Jos: A Decade of Fear and Violence in central Nigeria' and Jos: Top-Down and Bottom-Up Approaches to Conflict Resolution', in Mustapha, Abdul-Rauf and Ehrhardt, David, eds. *Creed and Grievance: Muslims, Christians, and Society in northern Nigeria*, also see Claude Ake, *The feasibility of democracy in Africa*. (Dakar, Senegal, Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa, 2000), 116.

<sup>116</sup> Ibeanu and Momoh, State Responsiveness to Public Security Needs: The Politics of Security Decision-Making, Nigeria Country Study, (*CSDG Papers*, no. 14, 2008), 8.

<sup>117</sup> Ahire, *Imperial Policing*, 28.

...denotes the use of physical force, or the threat of it, by the police against internal and external challenges to the survival and acceptance of the colonial state and its authority...in colonial Nigeria, the militaristic style of policing dominated the period between 1860 and 1914, when the police, in conjunction with other colonial armed forces and coercive apparatuses, joined hands to conquer the indigenous societies and to pacify indigenous resistance to colonial rule.<sup>118</sup>

Accordingly, the militaristic form of policing following conquest was restricted to events of economic crisis and social upheavals like anti-tax protest, and pockets of resistance across the country. On the other hand, civil policing in Ahire's conception:

...is the extension of police coercion beyond the narrow confines of the workplace or public order into all aspects of the superstructure. In other words, civil policing refers to policed regulation of auxiliary economic functions, (and) public order...In this regard, the police were involved with activities like the regulation of environmental and moral hygiene, licensing duties, guard duties, regulating public assemblies, suppressing secret societies, oracles, and other cultural activities...In colonial Nigeria, civil policing featured mainly after the completion of the main wave of conquests and pacifications, after 1914...it was a means of extending state control and making it more efficient. It was demilitarized coercion.<sup>119</sup>

Ahire's approach here provides valued analysis when conceptualised as 'forms' of policing or varied modus operandi of policing. The problem, however, is that Ahire presents the two in a linear process, with the civil form sequentially succeeding the militaristic form. However, as he does allude in his analysis and as I have shown in this section and previous chapters, these forms of policing did not straddle particular periods in any distinct fashion. Rather, they existed and were practised concurrently.

Ibeanu and Momoh rightly argue that while there is variance in the understanding of insecurity from the colonial to the post-colonial context and the forces that constituted such threats to security equally vary, in both cases 'security has had an unchanging and fixated meaning. Security is about the state; it is both the prerogative and obligation of the state and its controllers to protect them, and it is in this context that the Nigerian police emerged and continued to develop in the post colony.'<sup>120</sup> In sum, the post-colonial Nigerian Police Force (NPF) is not attuned to be in the service of ordinary citizens, neither is it obligated to operate

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<sup>118</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 8.

under democratic norms and principles; peoples of the colony were subjects who were not practically entitled to be protected by the state. Conceptualisations of security are not necessarily state centric; personal security, security nexus around the family and community as observed by Baker<sup>121</sup> are valid and should not be discounted. In post-colonial Nigeria, the people developed a culture of not expecting the state to protect them.

As I have analysed previously, some important monographs have documented the history of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). What is lacking in the literature is not just the absence of a study that focuses on a history of non-state policing, but more generally, the literature on policing in Nigeria lacks a historical ethnography of policing. While Kemi Rotimi<sup>122</sup> does document the politics and dynamics of decentralized policing of colonial Nigeria, providing insight on a macro level and Olly Owen's<sup>123</sup> contribution does an excellent job of providing us with a contemporary ethnography of policing. There remains a gap in our historical knowledge of policing at the micro (local) level. One of the objectives of my thesis is to address this gap. I argue that when studying policing solely within the boundaries of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) an important aspect of policing is left out. From when it was established, the institution of policing in Nigeria was plural. Attempts to centralise it looked to have succeeded, but I argue only on the surface. Plurality has re-emerged on the ground and has continued to evolve and recreate itself. Institutional state policing in Nigeria from the onset was instituted on a plural basis. I argue that plurality within the context of Nigerian policing has to be approached and understood on two levels. For lack of better categories, there is a macro and a micro level. It is my contention that to understand the current and emerging issues around policing practice and attempts at policing reform there is a need to properly grasp macro and micro historical trajectories of plural policing in Nigeria. The macro level refers to the dynamic between the Nigerian state at the centre and its constituent parts. At this level, the focus is on the debates and discourses in academia and within Nigerian politics for and against the decentralization of the police, referring not just to current debates but also drawing on such debates from the last decade of British colonialism. My thesis is particularly focused on the micro level; this refers to the plurality of actors engaged in, and debates about, everyday policing. I show that this plurality is not merely a function of current practice but it is also traceable to a specific historical moment, from the last decade of British colonialism. Based on the narrative the study shows that even though they evolved on

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<sup>121</sup> Baker, *Multi-Choice Policing*, 6.

<sup>122</sup> Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State...*

<sup>123</sup> Owen, *The Nigerian Police Force...*

different trajectories, the macro and micro processes both constitute key drivers of attempts to reform policing in Nigeria. For clarity, my use of macro and micro levels government indeed refers to scale, federal (centre) and local levels of the Nigerian state. Furthermore, I also use this to refer to particular types of policing.

### 3.5 Vigilantism

The term vigilante is used in contemporary Spanish adjectively to mean ‘watchful’ and as a noun ‘watchman’ or ‘guard’ and appears to have entered North American English from the south during the nineteenth century.<sup>124</sup> The concept was used to describe a plethora of non-state security actors that were active in the United States. Cowboys in western epics, to self-help security groups on the streets of San Francisco and New York have all been described as vigilantes. Amongst Africanist scholars, Ray Abrahams<sup>125</sup> is recognised as perhaps the first to give the contemporary phenomenon of vigilantism scholarly attention. Abrahams has compared and analysed a wide range of vigilante practices, from nineteenth century Vigilance committees in 19<sup>th</sup> century America to 20<sup>th</sup> century death squads in the Philippines<sup>126</sup>, and vigilante groups organised to combat cattle rustling amongst the Nyamwezi of Tanzania.<sup>127</sup> Although the word ‘vigilantism’ is widely invoked to refer to actions taken to control behaviour deemed to be ‘deviant’, outside the purview of the official justice system, there is as yet no scholarly consensus on what vigilantism is – especially as regards the nature of its relationship with the state. Johnston<sup>128</sup> argues that a key feature of vigilantism consists in its being ‘a voluntary activity engaged in by “active citizens” (private voluntary agents) without the state’s authority or support’. Johnston in an earlier conceptualisation was keen to show the characterisation of vigilantism as ‘autonomous’ this is contrasted to ‘responsible’ citizenship.<sup>129</sup> As I will show in my analysis this definition is too narrow and does not accommodate varied vigilante typologies. Rosenbaum and Sederberg<sup>130</sup> and David Kowalewski<sup>131</sup> on the other hand conclude that vigilantism is establishment violence, perpetrated in furtherance of conservative ends and designed to create, maintain, or recreate

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<sup>124</sup> Ray Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens: Vigilantism and the State*, (Cambridge University Press, 1998), 4.

<sup>125</sup> Ray Abrahams, “Sungusungu: village vigilante groups in Tanzania”, *African Affairs*, 86, (1987), 179-196.

<sup>126</sup> Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens*...

<sup>127</sup> Ray Abrahams “Law and order and the state in the Nyamwezi and the Sukuma area of Tanzania”, *Africa*, 59, 3, (1989), 354-368.

<sup>128</sup> Les Johnston, “What is Vigilantism?” *British Journal of Criminology*, 36, 2, (1996), 226.

<sup>129</sup> Johnston, *The Rebirth*, 59.

<sup>130</sup> Jon H. Rosenbaum and Peter C. Sederberg, eds. *Vigilante Politics*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1976), 4.

<sup>131</sup> David Kowalewski, “Establishment Vigilantism and Political Dissent”, *Armed Forces and Society*, 9, 1, (1982), 83-97, and “Cultism, insurgency and vigilantism in the Philippines”, *Sociological Analysis*, 52, 3, (1991), 41-53.

an established socio-political order.’ Vigilantes can be state officials or private citizens. In other words, the lines are blurred.

Michael L Fleisher<sup>132</sup> examines the state sponsored incarnation of the Sungusungu vigilante group amongst the Kuria of Tanzania. Suzette Heald<sup>133</sup> shows how ceding power to local communities reverses the centralism of the state and opens up a divide between the different branches of government – political administration supporting the vigilante groups, while police and judiciary opposing. This sentence seems to be incomplete. What we observe is a phenomenon that suggests that even at the local level the state is not a homogenous entity. Through our study of vigilantism, we see how different branches of the state find themselves in opposition to one another regarding their relations and engagement with vigilante groups. David Anderson<sup>134</sup> studied the activities of urban vigilantes in Nairobi Kenya (Mungiki and Taliban) exploiting urban insecurity for material gain. This heightens urban violence and it is seen to be both criminal and political in character.

Two important volumes on vigilantism are by David Pratten and Atreyee Sen<sup>135</sup> and Thomas G. Kirsch and Tilo Gratz<sup>136</sup>. Among other things, the authors make three important points that I find relevant for my conceptualisation of vigilantism. Firstly, the case studies demonstrate that vigilantism is a relational phenomenon – relational to the state. The primary focus of the authors here is the need to question the conception that sees the state as a unitary entity. In considering questions of legality and illegality, legitimacy and illegitimacy, state and non-state, we are able to subject existing notions of power and authority not just at the context case level, but also at a broader conceptual level.

Secondly, the volume makes the important argument that vigilante groups can change their rationale from filling a gap and responding to a quest for order by society to acting as agents of state power and legitimating the authority of the state. As I show in my thesis, this paradoxical relationship between vigilante groups and the state is not always necessarily a function of historical change across time; vigilante practice, which I have observed, acts in the

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<sup>132</sup> Michael L. Fleisher, *Kuria Cattle Raiders: Violence and Vigilantism on the Tanzania/Kenya Frontier*, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2000)

<sup>133</sup> Suzette Heald “State, Law, and Vigilantism in Northern Tanzania,” *African Affairs* 105, 419, (2005), 265–283.

<sup>134</sup> David Anderson “Vigilantes, violence and the politics of public order in Kenya,” *African Affairs* 101, 405, (2002), 531–555.

<sup>135</sup> David Pratten and Atreyee Sen eds., *Global Vigilantes: Perspectives on Justice and Violence*, (London: Hurst, 2007)

<sup>136</sup> Kirsch and Gratz, eds., *Domesticating Vigilantism...*

interest of strengthening the state and simultaneously undermines it. Vigilantism as Abrahams notes has a power to generate ambivalence. Constitutive of vigilante group practice is the agency of citizens to support or stand in for the state, but communities are not homogeneous, as elements within such communities may try to exploit community initiatives for their own ends.<sup>137</sup>

In understanding vigilante practice, particularly when it borders on criminality, we should seek to situate the function of political economy, as violence has a capacity to create new forms of patronage, power and control. Since the 1999, return to civil rule in Nigeria Vigilante groups have found reason to organise themselves and strived to further legitimate their existence. Bruce Baker<sup>138</sup> examines the idea of multi-choice policing in Uganda and Sierra Leone, argues that there is a range of options available for the average citizen, and different groups do different things. A shortcoming of Baker's otherwise useful contribution is the fact that the arguments made and even the cases presented are largely descriptive and Baker's over enthusiasm with the non-state category of policing means he fails to adequately recognise the role the state is already playing in sanctioning and legitimating non-state actors. I have observed from my research that the so-called paradox of failures of state policing constituting the objective of non-state policing and yet the state is still required to support the non-state does not necessarily hold. What is rather unfolding is the state does recognise its failures or weakness and is actively using the non-state- as an extension of the state; the lines of state and non-state are quite blurred. This is not to read as a commendation of the state, rather it describes processes of statecraft beyond a state-centric notion, showing how intertwined and interdependent the state-society nexus often is.

### **3.5.1 The Nigerian Context**

There is a growing body of literature that has examined the various types and diverse functions of vigilante groups and non-state policing structures in Nigeria. These existing studies are a reflection of Nigeria's pluralistic landscape, focusing on the activities of vigilante groups, local militias and local private guarding outfits. The research has particularly focused on the southern zones of Nigeria,<sup>139</sup> though there has also been some research work on the

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<sup>137</sup> Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens*, 3.

<sup>138</sup> Baker, *Multi-Choice Policing...*

<sup>139</sup> Examples of such literature are Rufus T. Akinleye, "Ethnic Militancy and National Stability in Nigeria: A Case Study of the Odua People's Congress", *African Affairs*, 100, 401, (2001), 623-640. Bruce Baker, "When the Bakassi Boys came: Eastern Nigeria Confronts Vigilantism", *Journal of Contemporary African Affairs*, 20, (2002) 223-244. David Pratten, 'The Thief eats his Shame: Practice and Power in Nigerian Vigilantism', *Africa* 78, 1, (2008). Kate Meagher, "Hijacking Civil Society: the Inside Story of the Bakassi Boys Vigilante Group of South-

religious functions of non-state actors in northern Nigeria<sup>140</sup>, and recent research on the role of non-state security actors, particularly ethnic militia groups, in mobilization and group violence in some of central Nigeria's conflict theatres.<sup>141</sup> Therefore, it is difficult to address this phenomenon as a Nigerian collective, as like most Nigerian social phenomena it is a product of a highly diverse society, with varied regional and community histories.

Vigilantes have organised at different levels and through varied means: from lineages to clans, ethnic groups to religious organisations. They are present in many locations and operate in different settings, from villages to wards, districts and city streets. They function for different reasons, from fighting crime - particularly armed robbery and theft - to criminality and political lobbying. They have championed the quest for different modes of citizenship, other than the nation: religious and ethnic forms of belonging, such as Hisbah – and the discourses of belonging to and mobilizing a larger Muslim ummah. The Yoruba Oodua People's Congress (OPC) - championing neo-ethnic nationalism. While most of the literature has focused on vigilantism amongst the larger Nigerian ethnic groups - the Bakassi Boys among the Igbo, the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) among the Yoruba, and the Yanhisba and Yanbanga<sup>142</sup> among the Hausa of Kano. Other studies show how the phenomenon is unfolding amongst minority ethnic groups of the Niger Delta<sup>143</sup> and the Middle Belt area. I would argue that what is lacking is a further deepening of our understanding of vigilantism within the Middle Belt zone of Nigeria, hence the focus of my study on Plateau State.

In a thematic debate and understanding of vigilantism in Nigeria can be categorised in to two broad categories. On the one hand are those who make the case for a 'cultural' understanding

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Eastern Nigeria", *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 45, 1, (2007), 89-115, and Fourchard, "A New Name for an Old Practice..."

<sup>140</sup> See Murray Last, "The Search for Security in Muslim Northern Nigerian", *Africa* 78, 1, (2008), 41-63. Fatima Adamu, Gender, Hisba and the Enforcement of Morality in Northern Nigeria, *Africa* 78, 1, (2008), 136-152. and Jonathan Matusitz and Michael Repass, "Gangs in Nigeria: An Updated Examination", *Crime Law Social Change*, (Springer Science and Business Media, 2009)

<sup>141</sup> See Adam Higazi, "Social Mobilization and Collective Violence: Vigilantes and Militias in the Lowlands of Plateau State, Central Nigeria", *Africa* 78, 1, (2008), 108-135.

<sup>142</sup> Banga is a Hausa mis-pronunciation of the word 'Vanguard' in the 70s and 80s vigilante groups in Plateau state was known as Yanbanga. In recent times amongst the Hausa speaking areas they prefer Yansintiri – which means 'watchmen,' or the official legal title Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN).

<sup>143</sup> David Pratten, "Singing thieves: History and practice in Nigerian popular justice," in Artreye Sen and David Pratten eds., *Global Vigilantes*, (Hurst and Company, London, 2007), 175-206. also see David Pratten, "Bodies of Power: Narratives of Selfhood and Security in Nigeria," in Thomas Kirsch and Tilo Gratz eds., *Domesticating Vigilantism in Africa*, (James Currey, Suffolk and Rochester, 2010), 118-138, and Higazi, "Social Mobilization and Collective Violence", *Africa*, 108-135.



and on the other hand are the proponents of a 'rational'. We start with the cultural reading. In an attempt to put forward an explanation for the rise of vigilantism in southern Nigeria Pratten and Gore, amongst the key proponents of the cultural reading lay emphasis on the primacy of cultural roots and practices that have a historical basis and relevance within the community. They argue that, vigilantism or vigilante action in Nigeria is:

...based directly on secret society revivals or drawing indirectly on the idiom of the secret society, has been a common response to crime since the [Nigerian] civil war [1967-1970]. Contemporary vigilantism therefore represents the articulation of claims to a set of rights based on the historical and spiritual legitimacy of young powerful men...defending the village under the protection of locally reputed charms, medicines and oaths.<sup>144</sup>

They further argue that these cultural practices are employed by these youth organisations and vigilante groups not just as tools to re-establish order, but more importantly to legitimise their participation in Nigeria's 'politics of plunder,' which though traced back to the historical oil boom, was given a vent and intensified after the transition of the late 1990s.

The second reading or the 'rational' strand argues that the vigilantism of the late 1990s are a product of popular institutional struggles, which are however unfortunately vulnerable and subject to manipulation by the state. While vigilantism is a response to the failures of the police force and escalating criminality, it is also a response to a predatory state that had a long legacy of military rule and high handedness in the maintenance of security.<sup>145</sup> The experience of the state's arrogation of consolidated violence manifest in the production of legitimate violence. In the post-1999 era, these groups have been hijacked by the political class and deployed in the pursuance of political goals, involving tactics such as thuggery and electoral violence. As Meagher argues, it is these developments, rather than pre-colonial security systems, secret societies or opportunism of disgruntled youth, which account for the rise of vigilante groups in the 1990s Nigeria.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> This analysis suggest a reference to precolonial society, not easily captured just by 'culture' and 'tradition', for more on this view see Charles Gore and David Pratten "The Politics of Plunder: The Rhetoric's of Order and Disorder in Southern Nigeria", *African Affairs*, 102, (2003), 211-240, Royal African Society, as cited by Meagher (2007), 91.

<sup>145</sup> Ukoha Ukiwo, "Deus ex machina or Frankenstein Monster? The changing roles of Bakassi Boys in eastern Nigeria", *Democracy and Development* 3, 1, (2002) 39-51.

<sup>146</sup> Kate Meagher, "Hijacking Civil Society", 96.

From what I have gathered from my study of vigilante groups in Plateau State Nigeria, it is clear to me that neither the cultural nor the rational arguments can stand alone. Rather the phenomenon I have studied in its historical form and observed in the contemporary speaks to both cultural and rational practices. In some cases, the state actively opposes a group, in an effort to maintain its monopoly on the means of violence and on the administration of justice, while in another case the state decides to look the other way, or give its tacit approval. There are other cases where the state seeks to infiltrate or influence, or even actively take the group over and reinvent it. I approach this study understanding that these terms are problematic, and not always separate and distinct – the lines are sometimes blurred, and there are several layers of understanding. While vigilantism may often serve as a vehicle for political, economic, generational, religious, and ethnic jockeying. An instrumentalist view, while relevant may not be able to explain the phenomenon of vigilantism, as we know it is about more than that – they are not just tools to be used by politicians. In the final analysis, all we can do is to present extensive understanding of specific contexts based on grounded local histories.<sup>147</sup> This will facilitate comparative research on vigilantism in different contexts.

From the foregoing analysis, four key conceptual perspectives and explanations of vigilantism drive this study. The classical conceptualization is that which understands vigilantism as a response to state policing failures: vigilante groups emerged and are still sustained because the failure of the post-colony (Nigeria) leaves gaps in the provision of services, security included. Vigilantism therefore feeds off unsatisfactory provision of law and order by the state. I do recognize that some of the vigilante groups that have been studied in different parts of Nigeria could be understood within this conception of a quest for order, directly or indirectly linked to the inability of the state to police the totality of its territory. However, I argue that this response to policing failures does not necessary amount to state weakness. Vigilante action could equally create a contrasting variation. Fourchard<sup>148</sup> in his study of the Oodu'a People's Congress (OPC) in southwest Nigeria makes this point quite convincingly where he argues that instead of looking at vigilante groups as a supposed decline of the police force or weakness and failure of the state, we should consider them as an attempt to introduce

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<sup>147</sup> Several empirical studies have analysed this sub-strand of non-state security actors. Some of which are: Abrahams, *Vigilant Citizens...*, Pratten and Sen, *Global Vigilantes...*and, Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams "Introduction: the privatisation and globalisation of security in Africa", *International Relations*, 21, (2007), 13-41, Bruce Baker, *Security in Post-Conflict Africa: The Role of Non state Policing*, (New York: CRC Press, Taylor and Francis, 2010).

<sup>148</sup> Fourchard, "A New Name for an Old Practice..."

forms of community policing,<sup>149</sup> clearly showing the bottom-up dynamic of non-state policing in Nigeria.<sup>150</sup> Secondly, the approach and understanding of vigilante groups in this thesis are borrowed from the notion that understands vigilantism as everyday policing, as Buur and Jensen<sup>151</sup> argue that there are contexts where vigilantism can be understood as a form of community based policing<sup>152</sup>, in constant interaction with the state (police) and with society. Consequently vigilantism is constitutive of a policing landscape that is characterized by plurality; a plurality of actors and practices.

Thirdly, also important to the conceptualization of vigilantism in my work is the attention that Fourchard gives to the historical process.<sup>153</sup> While an ethnographic understanding of vigilante practice is clearly useful, in agreeing with Fourchard I argue that we gain more insight when we explore the historical trajectory. I therefore trace continuities and discontinuities in plural policing practice from its early colonial and post-colonial versions of the more recent, organized and structured form. Finally Gratz's analytical notion of vertical encompassment,<sup>154</sup> explains how vigilantes set out to gain legitimacy by demonstrating effectiveness over time, vertical encompassment helps us explain the evolution of practice from night patrols on a small scale to setting up road blocks, migrating from punishments informed by the given cultural context to mimicking statutory institutions (police and courts) showing movements and shifts of practice and punishment across historical periods, migrating from one legal code to another, and creating new legal codes that cover periodic time across different generations.

My entry point and departure from these existing studies of policing is imbedded in my approach of understanding vigilantism as a constituted part of a plural policing landscape or what Hills<sup>155</sup> calls 'police system'. Through its practices, vigilantism has changed the way we think of policing at least in a Nigerian context, but policing has also changed vigilante

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<sup>149</sup> It must be observed though that there are some exceptions. In some cases, it is not the state making the attempt; some vigilantes have been anti-state. In Anambra state however, from 1997 to 2000 the state house of assembly passed a law to transform (co-opt) the Bakassi Boys hired by traders' association into Anambra Vigilante Services. The coexistence with formal police was not smooth

<sup>150</sup> Fourchard, "A new name for an old practice", 16-40.

<sup>151</sup> Lars Buur and Steffen Jensen, "Introduction: Vigilantism and the policing of everyday life in South Africa", *African Studies* 63, 2 (2004), 140.

<sup>152</sup> Note community based policing is different from community policing.

<sup>153</sup> Fourchard, "A new name for an old practice", 16-40.

<sup>154</sup> Tilo Gratz, 'Devi and his Men: The Rise and Fall of a Vigilante Movement in Benin' in Thomas Kirsch and Tilo Gratz, eds. *Domesticating Vigilantism in Africa*, (James Currey, 2010), 79-97.

<sup>155</sup> Alice Hills, "Policing Africa", 10.

practice, the interaction has created a certain kind of symbiotic interpenetration. Therefore, the history of vigilante practice is better understood when we equally track the history of the Nigerian police. I argue that studying policing solely within the boundaries of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), a considerable category of policing is left out. From when it was established, the institution of policing in Nigeria was plural. Attempts to centralise it looked to have succeeded, but I argue only on the surface.

### **3.6 Socialisation as Analytical Framework**

The notion of socialisation is of course broad, broader than how it has been applied in this study. For this study, socialisation is used as an important key for analysis of institutions of policing. Two important activities are taking place, which have been captured as processes of socialisation. Firstly, the socialisation of identification and secondly, the socialisation of practice. The socialisation of identification is the process of experiencing commonality and connectedness, commonality being what a group shares: features and attributes, in our context this is manifest in social backgrounds, as most members of these groups are drawn from the lower scales of the ladder, and have minimal levels of Western education. On the other hand, connectedness is what makes them a unit –what connects and holds them together: there are bridges and then there are chains. By bridges, I mean a sense of duty, a sense of serving the community and doing well not just for the community but also for themselves. They want to secure a means of livelihood. In reference to chains, I speak of atrocities perpetrated in the course of doing the job. The social functions of perpetrating violence extrapolated in chapter 7. In regards to the socialisation of practice, the main concern is to understand how individuals and groups engaged in policing obtain and come to have the specific competencies they exhibit. Whether we refer to the NAPF of the colonial era, or the *Yanbanga* of the 1970s, Community Policing initiatives of the 1980s, or more recently the Vigilante Group of Nigeria – what all share in common is that they are grass root based, and they are clearly authored with a considerable involvement of the state (local, provincial and national). This study seeks to understand the socialisation of practice, across this historical trajectory. Concisely, how have individuals and groups acquired the knowledge and gained the understanding of policing practice?

### 3.6.1 The Socialisation of Identification

Identity is an important category in the analysis and understanding of Nigeria's social landscape. Scholars of Nigerian society have used the notion of identity to understand the dynamics at play in its different segments. Obviously, the literature offers different applications of identity. There are those who see identity as a distinguishing characteristic of social groups, identity as structured sameness, and a given identity according to such conclusions determines behaviour. This was influenced by the work of early anthropologist/colonial administrators.<sup>156</sup> The other major conclusions we can draw from the literature are analysis that attribute agency to actors, actors shape identities and use same to further their interest. Drawing from empirical research amongst the Hausa minority group in Ibadan Nigeria, Cohen argued that ethnic identity is a form of political organisation where cultural boundaries are invoked in order to secure the group's symbolic capital.<sup>157</sup> Such conclusions though leave us with unresolved problems, the former ends up neglecting constant shifts over long periods and the latter on the other hand reduces impacts of notions to the conscious choices and strategies of key actors.<sup>158</sup> This often leaves us with an instrumentalist view of religion and ethnicity.

There is the extrapolation initially influenced by Marxian frameworks that understand the use of identity (ethnicity and religion) as a tool for elitist political manipulation.<sup>159</sup> Identity as a category of social belonging has also been deployed in analysis of conflict and sectarian violence. We find the interaction of ethnicity, religion and elite interest inextricably linked to historical and contemporary outbreaks of violent conflict.<sup>160</sup> Suberu asserts that identity conflicts in Nigeria emanate from two sources, "The general socio-psychological struggle to secure, assert, affirm, enhance and promote ethnic (religious, or other) group worth, identity

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<sup>156</sup> In some cases, these two categories were separate; however, there are several instances where individuals doubled as administrators and anthropologists.

<sup>157</sup> Abner Cohen, *Custom and Politics in Urban Africa: A Study of Hausa Migrants in Yoruba Towns*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969), 193-194.

<sup>158</sup> Geschiere, *The Perils of Belonging*, 31.

<sup>159</sup> Two major works make this point, see Yusuf Bala Usman, *The Manipulation of Religion in Nigeria: 1977-1987*, (Vanguard Printers and Publishers, 1987) and Okwudibia Nnoli, *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria*, (Enugu: Fourth Dimension, 1978).

<sup>160</sup> Samuel Egwu, *Ethnicity and Religious Violence in Nigeria*, (Abuja: African Centre for Democratic Governance (AFRIGON), 2001), and Higazi, "The Politics of Urban Violence in Jos", *Politique africaine*, 3-14.

or integrity and the competition among ethnic groups or more accurately among group elites for scarce material rewards or resources.”<sup>161</sup>

From the foregoing, one can assert that in a Nigerian spatial and thematic context, identity is still useful in understanding the boundaries that delineate social groupings and the forms of mobilisation. Whether it is the invocation of ethnic and religious identities for purposes of political mobilisation, or the extreme form of mobilisation for purposes of collective violence, identity in this form of practice still has analytical currency. However, for our purposes I want to use an analytical conceptualisation that seeks to explain the multiple forms and various ways in which individuals and group members within a plural policing context as a collective attribute the significance of their role and function in society, and identity as conceptualised from the foregoing cases referred above falls short.

Cooper and Brubaker have raised their concern on how identity has been appropriated as an all-explaining notion. To the extent that there is a tendency to “conceptualize all affinities and affiliations, all forms of belonging, all experiences of commonality, connectedness, and cohesion, all self-understandings and self-identifications in the idiom of identity saddles us with a blunt, flat undifferentiated vocabulary.”<sup>162</sup> Furthermore, in pointing out another problematic of the value of identity as a category of practice and analysis Cooper and Brubaker point to how identity is attached to certain qualifiers and conceptualised as unstable, multiple, fragmented, and fluid – the question being, why a concept that is routinely characterised as “multiple, fragmented and fluid”<sup>163</sup> should be conceptualised as identity, in a singularity. Instead of identity, Cooper and Brubaker suggest we rather use three clusters of more flexible terminology: “identification and categorization”; “self-understanding and social location”; and “commonality, connectedness and groupness.”<sup>164</sup> In sum, their main point is that the concept of identity is too ambiguous to be of analytical value and thus to maximise its analytical potential and for clarity we are urged to break it down into component parts.

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<sup>161</sup> Rotimi Suberu, 1991 *State and Local Government Re-organization in Nigeria*, (Ibadan: Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, 1994).

<sup>162</sup> Fredrick Cooper and Roger Brubaker, “Identity”, in *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*, Fredrick Cooper, (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2005), 60.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 63-64.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 71-75.

### **3.6.2 The Socialisation of Practice**

The other component of the socialisation process is to understand how vigilantes learn and imbibe policing practice. The basis of this proposition is the understanding that socialisation in this context is a process of gaining competencies in order to practice, in other words learning how to do police work. What influences conditioned the NAPF and vigilante groups towards the methods and practices they adopted? Influences are from varied sources. Plural policing actors in Plateau State Nigeria have been influenced by their relationships with state security institutions like the police and the army. Also important is the cultural context, where and when vigilantism emerges. Understanding how plural policing actors learn policing practice also shows how policing methods are discarded and some cases maintained and carried on to succeeding generations of vigilante members. Over the decades the individuals engaged in local grass root forms of policing has changed, for instance in our study the ex-servicemen recruited to serve in the NAPF are not the same as the retired soldiers who constituted the core leadership of the *Yanbanga* movement of the 1970s. While the vigilante group members who were formed as part of the community policing initiative of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) era, have still remained active since the official registration of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria in 1999, the involvement of a younger crop of members, with different motivations has created a new dynamic. Different forms of local grassroots policing initiatives have come under different influences and socialisation processes. It is to again show how vigilante groups operate based on different legal codes, some statutory, others influenced by the historical experience of practice carried on from one generation of vigilantes to another. Another feature of vigilantism, which I have sought to address in my thesis, is how vigilante practice is a means of earning a livelihood. This has not been adequately addressed in the literature. In our understanding of this process, we are able to show continuities and discontinuities concerning the role of actors as there are always members carried over from a preceding era of plural policing; equally, there are new members with new processes of socialisation and new practices.

### **3.7. Plurality as an Analytical Framework**

The conceptualisation of plurality in this thesis is broadly taken from notion of legal pluralism. The concept of legal pluralism has been the subject of intense scholarly debate and controversy over the years. This debate has been on what Benda-Beckman<sup>165</sup> refers to as a struggle for conceptual hegemony between legal scholars amongst themselves, and legal

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<sup>165</sup>Franz von Benda-Beckman, "Who's Afraid of Legal Pluralism?," *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, 47, (2002), 41.

scholars' vs legal anthropologists. Benda-Beckman who by his own admission claims he started as a legal scholar and later metamorphosed into an anthropologist makes the point that many debates between legal scholars and anthropologists on the notion of legal pluralism suffer from constant misunderstandings. One of such misunderstandings is the tendency to bring the concept of legal pluralism into a one-dimensional level of discourse, in which he argues 'authors look for the one correct or useful concept for both lawyers and social scientists, without appreciation of the fact that the other is engaged in a different enterprise'<sup>166</sup>.

In a legal context, the law is very much normative and closely associated with the state, and legal pluralism for such thinking would only apply to cases where the state through legislation, court rulings and judgements recognises non-state law.<sup>167</sup> An instance would be northern Nigeria where we find customary courts of appeal, and sharia courts of appeal with the same jurisdiction as the state high courts, presiding over specific cases that draw their legal codes from customs, traditions and Islam. My approach to the conception of law, is not to see it as strictly resident within the concept of the state, here it is diffused within a plural context. Law is conceived as a variable, the questions and methodology are focused on seeing law as an analytical concept,<sup>168</sup> it is not given, and not normative; rather understanding and insight emerges from studying the context and subsequently engaging in comparisons over time and space. Law therefore has many existences, it could be embodied in written text, or it can also exist in the knowledge of a given people.<sup>169</sup>

It is also important to note that, the notion of plurality as I used in this thesis does not suggest that legal codes or orders are on equal footing; my basic point is that they are in interaction. In my conceptualisation and understanding drawn from Plateau State Nigeria, any approach or notion that argues for the existence of a centralist mono-legal or policing construct historically or in the current landscape would remain at the level of myth. My conception of legal pluralism therefore draws from Sally Falk Moore, particularly where she claims that the social structure is constituted by several semi-autonomous fields, their definition is not given by

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>167</sup> There are particular scholars of legal pluralism who have argued for the capturing of pluralism within the boundaries of state law, or within one legal order for instance see, Woodman, Gordon R. (1998) 'Ideological combat and social observation: Recent debate about legal pluralism.' *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, 42: 21-59 then there are others who argue that this is not sufficient, and difference has to be rooted in different legal orders

<sup>168</sup> Benda-Beckman, "Who's is Afraid", 40.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 65-66.



how they are organised but by a processual characteristic, therefore Falk Moore argues that the aforementioned semi-autonomous social fields of a pluralistic context

“...generate rules and customs and symbols internally, but that it is also vulnerable to rules and decisions and other forces emanating from the larger world by which it is surrounded. [It also has]...rule making capacities, and the means to induce or coerce compliance; but it is simultaneously set in a larger social matrix which can, and does, affect and invade it, sometimes at the invitation of persons inside it...”<sup>170</sup>

Of specific relevance to my conception of plurality is the notion of plural policing. I adopt a broad definition of policing, this refers to all organised activity and services provided by statutory and non-statutory institutions that seek to ensure and maintain law, order and security in a given society. In a traditional state-centric sense, the provision of security and the maintenance of law and order are seen as the responsibility of the state to citizens. State security and justice institutions are therefore statutorily mandated to provide security, guarantee the safety of citizens and secure public and private property. We are however, invited and encouraged to consider and adopt notions of plurality<sup>171</sup> exactly because in various contexts around the globe the state is not alone in providing security and enforcing law and order. As I have already discussed in my conceptualisation of the Nigerian state our understanding is enriched when we consider the relationships and interactions between state and non-state actors in relation to administrative, law and order, and security functions, with notions like ‘twilight institutions’<sup>172</sup>, ‘polycephaly’<sup>173</sup>, and ‘heterarchy’<sup>174</sup> proving useful to our understanding of policing. In this sense, policing is thus a phenomenon that is characterised by cooperation, co-option, and at times conflict amongst that varied actors engaged in the occupation of policing. It then follows that the conceptualisation of policing as I have used it and argued from the historical study but also the current state of affairs is a mode of statecraft, a means of governing, situated within a plural landscape, that is shaped by

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<sup>170</sup> Sally Falk Moore, *Law as Process: An Anthropological Approach*, (LIT James Currey with IAI, 2000), .55. also see “Law and Social Change: The Semi-Autonomous Social Field as an Appropriate Subject of Study,” *Law and Society Review*, 7, (2000), 719-720.

<sup>171</sup> Bruce Baker calls it Multi-Choice Policing; see Baker, *Multi-Choice Policing in Africa...*

<sup>172</sup> Lund, *Twilight Institutions...*

<sup>173</sup> See Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardin, “Local Powers and a distant state”, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 441-468. and Bierschenk, “Powers in the Village”, *Africa*, 145 -173.

<sup>174</sup> Klute and Mbalo, *The Problem of Violence...*

political, economic and social interest and not simply a technical function of state confined to the lens of criminologist.<sup>175</sup>

### 3.8. Authority

The conceptual framework is also built around the notion of authority, I recognise the historical and genealogical discourses around the notion of authority and in deploying it as an important pillar of my thesis, I focus on relationships and interactions, and secondly what they create. On one level, my thesis is about understanding historical and contemporary relationships and interactions. I focus on three-dimensional relationships – vigilante groups amongst themselves, vigilantes and the communities they operate in and vigilantes and the state. Here authority is deployed with all its relational properties, so who has authority and on what basis? Is authority fluid, or static? How is authority distributed? How is authority discharged? I begin though with a journey through a genealogy of the concept, of course informed by the specific relevance to my framework.

My understanding and conceptualisation of authority is informed first from the Weberian conception. In his essay ‘The types of legitimate authority’<sup>176</sup> published posthumously in 1958, Weber proposes a theory of legitimate authority. For Weber legitimate authority is the coming together of two things. First there is ‘macht’ power, or better understood in English as domination, then there is ‘herrschaft’<sup>177</sup> – the relations of domination, ‘to rule’ the probability that a command will be obeyed, this is understood as legitimacy. Therefore, power + legitimacy equals authority. Therefore, an individual within the social context is treated as an embodiment of authority when he possesses both power and the legitimacy to exercise it. Weber argues that there are three types of legitimate authority<sup>178</sup>. First, the legal rational authority, based on a system of rules or laws, and legal codes that are accepted by the whole society or a majority of it, and are all expected to abide by them. Legal authority therefore is not necessarily by agreement; it can also be established via imposition on grounds of

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<sup>175</sup> See Helene Maria Kyed, Review of Multi-Choice Policing in Africa by Bruce Baker, *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 47, (2009), 154-155.

<sup>176</sup> Max Weber “The three types of legitimate rule”, *Berkeley Publications in Society and Institutions*, 41, (1958), 1-11. also see Max Weber *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, 2 Vols. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1978), 215.

<sup>177</sup> Stefano Guzzini further elaborates on the meaning of herrschaft; he notes, “The translation of Weber’s concept of Herrschaft is notoriously difficult. For its hierarchical element connected to the underlying idea of force/violence, ‘domination’ seems most appropriate; ‘rule’ captures better his interest in regularised command competence; and finally, ‘authority’ renders perhaps best his insistence on legitimacy mechanisms” in exercising power. See Stefano Guzzini, *Re-reading Weber, or: The Three Fields for the analysis of power in International Relations*, (Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS Working Paper, 29, 2007), 17.

<sup>178</sup> Weber, “The three types”, 215.

expediency and utility, and it does not necessarily need to be a democratic society; all it means is that there is a system of law.

Secondly, there is traditional authority, based on inheritance or simply put, what has already been; there is belief in the sanctity of age-old rules. This is linked either to tradition or to a gerontocratic order, and it is not necessarily imposed by force; obedience is hence designated according to traditional rule. The third typology in the Weberian concept of legitimate authority is charismatic. Like beauty, charisma is determined by the beholder – or the followers of a given ruler. An embodiment of charismatic authority is considered to possess exceptional qualities that can be constituted as being super-natural. For my purposes, I am particularly interested in Weber's legal-rational and traditional conceptions of authority. It is interesting to note that Weber had also conceptualised power within the lens of a historical process, 'a historical evolution of the means of coercion' as against a Marxian notion of 'the evolution of the means of production.' Therefore, in the final analysis a Weberian process ends with a legal rational authority, where the power of coercion (violence) is expected to be the monopoly of the state.

Also important for my understanding of authority is the contribution of Hannah Arendt, in her essay "What is Authority?"<sup>179</sup> Arendt traces the conception of authority through what we regard loosely as the 'pre-modern period' developed by Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, and Weber. Arendt's objective was to show the trajectory of thinking from traditional society to society in the time of the enlightenment, and to show the influence this had on understanding power and authority.<sup>180</sup> Arendt's major argument is to see traditional society in terms of authority being embedded within the traditional social order where obedience was expected. However, this obedience was also usually based upon some type of convincing, persuasion. She notes that it is when force or coercion is used that authority has failed.<sup>181</sup> Arendt says "...Since authority always demands obedience, it is commonly mistaken for some form of power or violence. Yet authority precludes the use of external means of coercion; where force is used, authority itself has failed. Authority, on the other hand, is incompatible with persuasion, which presupposes equality and works through a process of argumentation."<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>179</sup> Hannah Arendt "What is Authority," in the Portable Hannah Arendt, ed. Peter Baehr (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 462-507. also see Hannah Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, (Penguin Classics, New York, 2006)

<sup>180</sup> Arendt, "What is Authority,"...

<sup>181</sup> Craig Van Gelder, "Defining the Issues Related to Power and Authority in Religious Leadership", *Journal of Religious Leadership*, 6, 2, (2007), 2.

<sup>182</sup> Arendt, *Between Past and Future*, 92.

According to Arendt, and perhaps to put it quite bluntly violence (power) or in my research context *Iko* is the tool of the impotent, the weapon of use for those whom have failed to achieve their goals with authority. This would of course read in direct contrast to Weber's celebrated argument of the legal rational authority as a stage where the state has a monopoly of the means of coercion (violence). First a little contextualisation on how we should juxtapose Weber to Arendt.

Hannah Arendt's political and social theory was much influenced by her experiences, particularly the Second World War. So when Arendt gave us insights on authority, the banality of evil, and on violence she was writing within the context of her time, and so was Weber, as he wrote before the totalitarian regimes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is not a wholesale acceptance of everything Weber wrote, and there are fundamental questions and critiques of his work, not least by Leo Straus<sup>183</sup> and Carl Friedrich<sup>184</sup>. Peter Blau<sup>185</sup> notes that Weber's work was subjected to some kind of opposing critique, for instance "historians criticised him for disregarding the specific historical conditions under which the social phenomena he analyses have taken place, which sometimes they claim leads him to combine historical events that occurred centuries apart into a conception of a social system."<sup>186</sup> Sociologists on the other hand Blau argues have criticised Weber of being "preoccupied with interpreting unique historical constellations, such as Western capitalism, instead of studying recurrent social phenomena which make it impossible to develop testable generalisations about social structures."<sup>187</sup> Perhaps of most relevance for me is Peter Blau's critique on the Weberian conception of authority, Blau points out that "...the substantive theory has been criticised for focusing primarily on the beliefs that legitimate authority, while neglecting to conceptualize systematically the structural condition that gave rise to it."<sup>188</sup>

My departure from Weber therefore is to argue that all forms or types of legitimate authority I describe and analyse are legitimated by some form of law, norm, or legal code, but also by other variables that I do not describe as traditional, or as charismatic rather as the symbolic but also as customary. What I refer to as traditional-customary authority in my context is

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<sup>183</sup> Leo Straus, *Natural Right and History*, (University of Chicago Press, 1953), 35-40.

<sup>184</sup> Carl J. Friedrich, "Some Observations on Weber's Analysis of Bureaucracy," in *Readers in Bureaucracy*, Robert K. Merton et al eds (Glencoe, 1952), 31.

<sup>185</sup> Peter M. Blau, "Critical Remarks on Weber's Theory of Authority", *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LVII, 2, (1963), 305-316.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.*, 305.

<sup>188</sup> *Ibid.*, 316.

informed and backed up by state law. It is for example colonial state law that made the traditional ruler ‘powerful’ and relevant under indirect rule and thus created a system of decentralized despotism. It is the same state law, this time in the postcolony that then stripped the traditional ruler of all his executive local powers and replaced him with the educated elite cum politician. Yet still, the traditional ruler that I have studied also possesses such agency that propels him to creatively invent local systems like vigilantism for maintaining and sustaining relevance, and still exercise such power based on a hybrid legal code. Traditional cultural rights of being the custodian of the land and thus its protector but also expectations from the state that he contributes in keeping and maintaining peace constitute this code. The objective of my case studies is to show a fragmentation of the legal-rational authority. By differentiating actors I will therefore first show that, there are several legal-rational actors, then I will follow up by trying to deconstruct these categories and show the dynamics and basis for interaction. Also important for my analysis is the discussion of the historical trajectory that creates these varied contexts of legitimated authority.

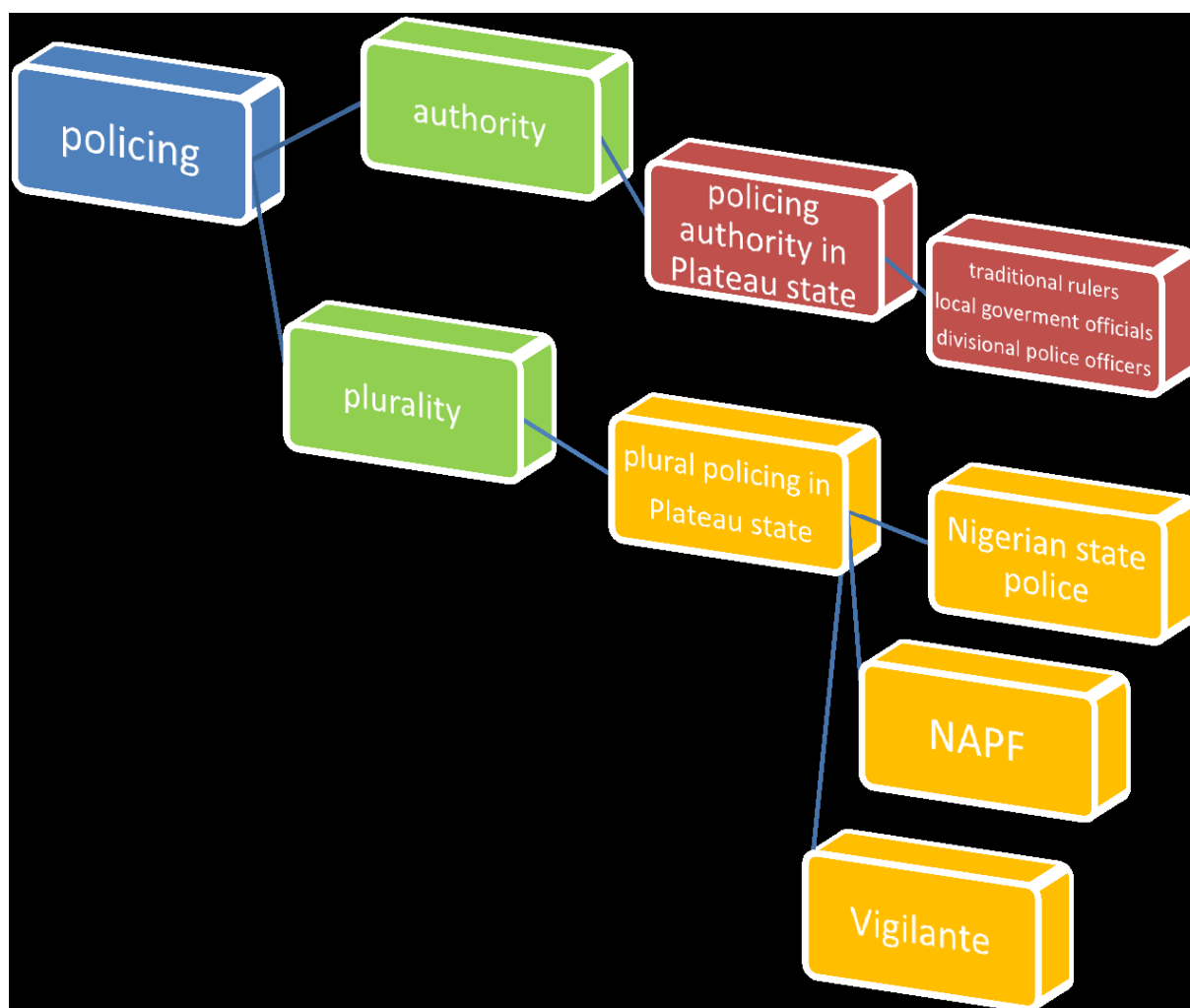
My approach is therefore set up to provide an understanding of state authority through its constituted parts and (Institutions, statutory laws, and practices) and its unconstituted parts (agents, non-statutory codes and practices). The question that follows would be to inquire how the state became formal and informal, hindrance and facilitator – It is constituted and unconstituted characteristics are a product of a historical trajectory. This trajectory is expanded through the lens of ‘decentralised despotism’ or stratified citizenship. When people of the colony found themselves at the bottom of this stratified ladder of citizenship, they emerge as subjects of state rule. This state rule is manifested in the creation of the ‘native’ for the purposes of providing labour. In the postcolony, the ‘native’ becomes a victim of physical violence and structural violence, as is the case in SAP. The historical process creates relevant dialectics as a basis for interaction. There is dialectic between the civil and the primordial publics; this dialectic is over the control of the economy. Then there is dialectic between ‘traditional’<sup>189</sup> and ‘modern’<sup>190</sup> for authority as the control of the political. When considered together, we have a dialectic that has rumbled over time for the control of the political economy. This is how we should understand the relationship between the Nigerian police and vigilante groups. Through the content of these relationships and interaction, I then attempt to

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<sup>189</sup> Traditional here refers to traditional and customary leaders.

<sup>190</sup> Modern here is in reference to educated elites, who emerged on the wave of nationalism and by independence wrestled power not just from the colonialist but also asserted their authority over traditional rulers, who they always regarded as backward.

show what it then creates. Vigilantism has evolved through processes of negotiation, expressed through varied forms of practice. This practice ranges from the symbolic, the cultural, and the socio-political. It reveals forms of practice that seek to gain legitimacy and appropriate authority through the adoption of modern global policing practice, while still holding on to recognisable forms domiciled in the local context. In sum, the concepts of plurality and authority constitute entry points for our understanding of the dynamics of interaction. Plurality is about practice and authority is about how practice is legitimized and how practice is governed and regulated.



**Figure 4:** The Diagram shows the Conceptual Framework illustrating the centrality of the two relational concepts used in this study.

### 3.9. Understanding Violence

The concept of violence as I have used it in this thesis is understood on two core conceptualisations. The first perspective is structural violence, which according to John Galtung, is violence that “is built into the structure, and shows up as unequal power and

consequently as unequal life chances.”<sup>191</sup> Secondly, violence in this study is also understood in its basic meaning. This is as action or behaviour involving physical force intended to injure, impair or cause death of someone or something, “a form of power, it is a doing-to and a being-done-to, the object of which is the human body.”<sup>192</sup>

Following on this premise, I contextualised violence in two particular analytical frameworks, violence as routinised everyday practice and violence as manifest by epic outbreaks of sectarian collective violence. What connects these conceptions is how I have deployed all in understanding a sociological history of plural policing. My conceptualisations of violence are informed by scholarly insights drawn from two key thinkers. I have relied on Walter Benjamin, and Slavoj Zizek. In his essay ‘The Critique of Violence,’ Walter Benjamin extrapolates the difference between divine and mythic violence. Mythic violence is understood as legalised violence. According to Benjamin, mythic violence has a close relationship with the law, in the sense that the instating and maintaining of the law requires coercion, which is inflicted on a body. Divine violence on the other hand is the antithesis of mythic violence; it is a break in accountability, divine violence stands in opposition to mythic violence. Benjamin writes, “...if mythic violence is law making, divine violence is law destroying; if the former sets boundaries, the latter destroys them; ...if the former is bloody, the latter is lethal without spilling blood.”<sup>193</sup> Relying on Benjamin as his theoretical inspiration, Slavoj Zizek develops an understanding of violence that is expressed in a dual conception. According to Zizek, what we identify and recognise as acts of crime, sectarian violence, and (physical violence) is subjective violence - there is a clearly identified subject responsible. Subjective violence is thus understood “as a perturbation of the normal peaceful state of things.”<sup>194</sup> In contrast, objective violence is understood as violence, which is “inherent to the normal state of things.”<sup>195</sup> Objective violence goes on according to Zizek without us noticing, because what we usually notice is a disruption of the recognised and accepted order, objective violence is that which is invisibly perpetrated so that the established order continues uninterrupted.

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<sup>191</sup> John Galtung “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research”, *Journal of Peace Research*, vol. 3, (1969), 167-191.

<sup>192</sup> Trutz von Trotha, “The Problem of Violence: Some Theoretical Remarks about ‘Regulative Orders of Violence’, Political Heterarchy, and Dispute Resolution beyond the State”, in *The Problem of Violence: Local Conflict Settlement in Contemporary Africa*, Georg Klute and Birgit Embalo eds., (Rudiger Koppe Verlag, Koln, 2011), 34.

<sup>193</sup> Walter Benjamin, “Critique of Violence” in *Reflections: Essays, Aphorisms, Autobiographical Writings*, Peter Demetz, ed., (Schocken Books, New York, 1986), 297.

<sup>194</sup> Slavoj Zizek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections*, (London: Profile Books, 2008), 2.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

The relevance of Benjamin and Žižek to my understanding of violence is its mythic and subjective contexts. In regards to subjective violence, my understanding revolves around an extrapolation of violence as a tool for regulating societal order. The manifestation of subjective and mythic violence is therefore captured in my notion of routinised everyday violence. This violence is historically rooted in the colonial formation of the Nigerian state. In other words, state power in the socio-political context I study has always been accompanied or preceded by violence. To understand the objectives, dynamics and the consequent functions of state violence (colonial and post-colonial) I turn to Franz Fanon and Hannah Arendt. Contemporary scholarly debates on violence and politics are often wont to relate Fanon and Arendt as contrasting arguments.<sup>196</sup> This is of course informed by the fact that Arendt's book *On Violence* is a response to Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. Unfortunately, *On Violence* is published years after Fanon's passing and thus we are denied the conversation that would have ensued between the two, and perhaps some deeper understanding and synthesis. This we do not have. Therefore, in spite of the fact that Arendt's book is a critical response to Fanon's treatise, in this study I have drawn from both conceptualisations.

Fanon's articulation of violence is laid out in his famous book *The Wretched of the Earth*. On a broader theoretical logic, Fanon can be situated within the scholarly tradition that has articulated how violence and politics are constantly entangled. When read as a thesis, the main gist of the book is about the use of violence as an instrument of suppressing, and exploiting the populations of the colonies. It is a sustained criticism of the foundations of colonialism through conquest, the dynamics and structures of colonial rule. Fanon equally extrapolates on the progressive properties of violence as a tool for liberation, having captured the condition and suffering of the colonised, violence is therefore a viable means to achieve the goal of liberation.<sup>197</sup> Physical violence was used to inaugurate the colonial state, and along with structural violence, it was deployed to sustain it, as Fanon has claimed, "colonialism is violence in its natural state."<sup>198</sup> Consequently, violence had to be employed to enforce the

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<sup>196</sup> See Elizabeth Frazer, and Kimberly Hutchings, "On Politics and Violence: Arendt Contra Fanon," *Contemporary Political Theory*, 7, (2008), 90-108. and Mark Muhannad Ayyash, "The Paradox of Political Violence," *European Journal of Social Theory*, 16, no. 3, (2013), 342-356.

<sup>197</sup> Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 2001)

<sup>198</sup> Fanon, Franz, *The Wretched of the Earth*, (Grove Press, 1968), 40.



colonial mandate. Metaphorically, in Fanonian conception violence is like a knife with the power to be channelled for good and equally for evil ends.

Hannah Arendt's main argument in contrast to Fanon is that violence is inherently anti-political. In other words, obedience that is secured through coercion (violent means) is precisely the antithesis of power. Arendt challenges what she understands as a deeply rooted conception of power, as characterised by vertical relations of command and obedience. Arendt, charges us to rather see power in horizontal dynamics. She writes that "power springs up whenever people get together and act in concert"<sup>199</sup> For Arendt, violence is destructive and therefore the instrument of the impotent, true power she argues, does not need coercion.

However, when we read the conclusions drawn by Fanon and Arendt we find some striking meeting points and compromises in their thinking. It is these points of compromise that I find useful in my conceptualisation and analysis of violence. For instance, there is an agreement on the unpredictability of violence, a point that gravitates closer to Arendt's initial thinking. This raises a paradoxical reading of Fanon, whereas large sections of the book are devoted to arguments that jollify violence, Fanon concludes with a note of caution by drawing attention to the corrupting and debilitating effects of violence, reactionary and revolutionary, impacting on perpetrators and victims respectively.<sup>200</sup> Routinised violence therefore relates to forms and practices of legitimated violence inherent in state authorities, who make claims to what von Trotha has termed "regulative orders of violence."<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>199</sup> Arendt, *On Violence*, 52.

<sup>200</sup> For a more elaborate analysis of this comparative features please see Frazer and Hutchings, "On Politics and Violence: Arendt Contra Fanon," *Contemporary Political Theory*.

<sup>201</sup> von Trotha "The Problem of Violence"...

## **Chapter Four: The Institutionalisation of Plural Policing (1945 to late 1990s)**

### **4.1. Introduction**

This chapter examines the origins and tracks the process of institutionalising plural policing in Nigeria, with a specific focus on Plateau State. I argue that to understand the current state of plural policing and its institutionalisation, there is a need to grasp macro and micro historical trajectories of plural policing in Nigeria; the chapter is focused on the macro process. To do this the chapter is structured into two major sections. In the first section I focus on the debates and discourses within Nigerian politics for and against the decentralization of the police, referring not just to current debates but also drawing on such debates from the last decade of British colonialism. Firstly, I discuss police reform concerning the structure of the institution as it relates to discourses of centralisation and decentralisation, drawn from politics and partially from the academia. The macro level refers to the dynamic between the Nigerian state at the centre and its constituent parts<sup>202</sup>, and plurality or the attempts at plurality at the level of the governance of policing. I argue that the style of police reform or better put the lack of reform in the substance of political oversight has been partly responsible for the inability of this critical state institution that has the statutory mandate to provide security and guarantee the safety of citizens to meet the expectation of the teeming populace.

The second section of the chapter shows how the historical trajectory of debates and policies at the macro level has influenced the process of institutionalising plurality at the micro level. The micro level refers to the plurality of actors engaged in everyday policing within my study area. The main question for this section is to account for how the administrative policies in Lagos and Kaduna (colonial and early post-colonial national and regional capitals) influenced developments in the Plateau Province, concerning the local administration and the processes of institutionalising plural policing. I focus on state processes that had a direct influence on policing and subsequently vigilantism. I contend that to understand the emergence of plurality we have to focus on two important policy reforms introduced by the colonial state and the early post-colonial state: the institutionalisation of paramountcy in the chieftaincy institutions of the Plateau Province of Nigeria from the early 1940s to the late 1950s and local government reforms in the 1970s. The chapter traces and shows an otherwise little known link between the plural policing landscape of colonial Nigeria and the evolution of a new plurality

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<sup>202</sup> Constituent parts here refers to Nigeria's federated states starting with a creation of 8 states in 1967, currently there are 36, plus the federal capital territory.

of policing that began to emerge in the late 1970s and which has continued to evolve in response to changing political and social contexts. I then proceed to show how plural policing evolved within the case study areas. I argue that there are two important institutions involved in the process - the state (the police) and non-state policing structures. What is observed is a history of state-society relations that significantly makes clear how processes of state building are evolving, within the ambit of policing.

## **4.2 Regionalisation, Centralisation and the Politics of Decolonising the Police**

In the run up to independence, several issues had to be negotiated between the outgoing colonial power and the incoming Nigerian leaders. One of such issues was the future of the police, for instance there were considerations on the process of Nigerianisation of the police, and the ethnic composition of NPF detachments in the various regions. Several members of the Federal Parliament in the early 1950s lamented on the difficulties caused by the inability of police officers to speak the language of the people in their constituencies.<sup>203</sup> This issue was soon settled and by August 1960, when the regional distribution of the NPF, according to place of origin allowed to the North 84.9%, East 93.6%, and the West 83.6%.<sup>204</sup> The substantive issue of centralisation or regionalisation (plural policing structure, with federal and regional police forces) and the control of the police soon emerged as a more difficult issue to resolve. This became the subject of prolonged negotiations from 1954 to 1959. These consultations and negotiations were done along regional lines and soon became politically charged amidst a web of conflicting interest. Before examining the varied interests at the time, it is instructive to provide the political background of constitutional developments that culminated with these negotiations.

In 1946 a new constitution was promulgated, the Richards Constitution (named after the then Governor General, Sir Arthur Richards) provided for an expanded legislative council empowered to deliberate on matters of national relevance. Houses of Assembly were created for the three regions to consider issues of regional importance. This laid the foundation of Nigeria's federal principle, with a deliberate attempt to devolve authority to the regions – concomitantly, it also signalled the foundation of regionalism as a firm alternative to political

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<sup>203</sup> Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria*, 152.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

unification. Thus, the formation and subsequent development of party politics took a regional dimension.<sup>205</sup>

In 1951, following a demand for greater autonomy an inter-parliamentary conference drafted the terms of the Macpherson constitution. The Macpherson constitution further entrenched the dual course of national political development. It provided for a central government, with a council of ministers, giving more impetus to political participation at the national level. It also gave a boost to regionalism. Autonomy was given to the regional assemblies<sup>206</sup> and the newly established federal House of Representatives could not override their powers. The Richards and Macpherson constitutions set the tone for subsequent discussions and negotiations of the Independence constitution, and this was based on regional interests. It is within this context that the debates, discussions, and negotiations on the future and role of the police are situated.

When these negotiations and consultations commenced in 1954 in a four year build up to the independence constitutional conference in 1958, there were two main positions on the table for consideration. The first was to have a single centralised federal police deploying in all parts of the country. The alternative position supported a regional police force in all the regions alongside a federal police reserve responsible for the capital. The northern and western regional premiers canvassed the latter. The British position, while they were still in control of the colony, was to maintain a single federal centralised police. The simple factor of cost as an impediment against a regional police force is very plausible, as some colonial officers mentioned.<sup>207</sup> The additional expense regionalisation would incur was an argument against it. There were also concerns from the top echelons of the Nigeria Police Force at the time that regionalising the police could possibly result in serious deterioration of the force within a short period.<sup>208</sup> The United Kingdom Government had also believed that tendencies to secession would be increased if the forces of public order were regionalised.<sup>209</sup> Whatever may have informed the position, one point was clear: Lagos recommended and London approved that HMG (Her Majesty's Government) would not and could not while still responsible for Nigeria, agree to the regionalisation of the police.<sup>210</sup> Interestingly, when the

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<sup>205</sup> Adiele E. Afigbo, "Background to Nigerian Federalism: Federal Features in the Colonial State", *Publius*, vol. 21, no. 4, (1991), 13-29.

<sup>206</sup> In the northern region a bicameral legislative system was established, a House of Assembly for elective representatives and a House of Chiefs for graded traditional rulers.

<sup>207</sup> NAK, No. CO554/1031, Chief Secretary, Lagos to Secretary of State, London, 16.October.1956, 2.

<sup>208</sup> NAK, No. CO554/1031, C.S.K Bovell, IGP, Regionalisation of the Nigeria Police, no date

<sup>209</sup> NAK, No. CO554/1031, Chief Secretary, Lagos to Secretary of State, London, 23.July.1956

<sup>210</sup> NAK, No. CO554/1031, Chief Secretary, Lagos to Secretary of State, London, 30.August.1958

Colonial Government in Lagos was trying to build up its argument for a unified Federal Police, Lagos sought out the position on the police in England and Wales from the Home Office in London, even going outfield to other former colonies and federations. Unfortunately, the briefings that returned regarding the police in other federations, particularly countries with the diversity and population similar to Nigeria, stated that nearly all the precedents were against the British plan for a unified federal police. Australia, Canada, India, the USA, the Central Africa Federation<sup>211</sup> all in 1956/7 had a form of a state, local or city police alongside the federal police.<sup>212</sup>

When examined, the preference of the regional governments in regards a unified or a decentralised police force shows quite varied and conflicting interests. The Northern Region was in support of the regionalisation of the police as articulated by its premier Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardauna of Sokoto. The Sardauna was regarded in colonial circles as a consistent advocate of regionalisation. His attitude was believed to have been influenced by the preponderance of Igbos working in some federal institutions in the North - for instance, in the Railway Police, and the purported bad behaviour of some of them.<sup>213</sup> There was unease at the scenario of having more police officers from other regions operating in the North. More substantively, as a regional premier, the Sardauna did not want a police commissioner operating in Kaduna with a federal police force answerable to Lagos; he found this unacceptable.<sup>214</sup>

The Western Region, led by Obafemi Awolowo's Action Group (AG), was also firmly in support of the regionalisation of the police. A briefing from Lagos to London in July 1956 in advance preparation for the Constitutional Conference of 1958 noted that the Action Group's arguments for regionalisation had been carefully prepared, and may be very difficult to counter.<sup>215</sup> The AG argued that denying the Regions police forces of their own was inconsistent with the principles that granted them self-government, more so since Regions are concurrently charged with the maintenance of public order they must be possessed of the instruments to carry out their charge. Awolowo found it illogical to be given concurrent

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<sup>211</sup> Formerly a British colonial federation comprising of present day Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Malawi (1953-1963)

<sup>212</sup> NAK, No. CO554/1031, Chief Secretary, Lagos to Secretary of State, London

<sup>213</sup> NAK, No. CO554/1031, Chief Secretary, Lagos to Secretary of State, London, 16.October.1956, 1.

<sup>214</sup> NAK, No. CO554/1531, Chief Secretary, Lagos to Secretary of State, London, 30.August.1958

<sup>215</sup> NAK, No. CO554/1031, Chief Secretary, Lagos to Secretary of State, London, 23.July.1956

responsibility to maintain public order without jurisdiction over the main instrument on which public order depends.<sup>216</sup>

There were also proponents of maintaining a unified federal police force. The Premier of the Eastern Region, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, had consistently supported this position. He was convinced that “the control of the police and the prisons by the Federal Government was the most viable means of guaranteeing security of persons, and untrammelled enjoyment of civil liberties under due process of law.”<sup>217</sup> Of note, here is the fact that the East had no Local Administration or Native Authority Police, unlike the North and West. This evidently swayed Dr. Azikiwe and his government in the east to favour a federal unified police force.

Also supporting a unified Federal Police Force were some minority groups, from the Northern and Western Regions who feared that regional control of the police would allow for the misuse of party political power by means of physical force. In June 1955 when the Western House of Assembly debated the draft Local Government Police law, the members representing Asaba, Warri and Benin feared that the Local Government Police would become a secret Police Force in the Western Region.<sup>218</sup> They wanted assurances of some supervision from the Federal Police if in an eventuality the police are regionalised. In the north, the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) that represented the opinions of ethnic minority groups in Northern Nigeria opposed any regionalisation of the police and informed the leaders of Nigeria’s major political parties represented at the London Conference and the Secretary of State for the Colonies accordingly.<sup>219</sup> The desire of the British therefore converged with that of the minorities on a preference for a unified Federal Police Force. This position was further strengthened by the recommendations of Harry Willink’s Commission of Inquiry into Minority Fears in 1958. The Commission recommended the “dual responsibility for law and order of the Federal and Regional Governments should be recognised, and as between these two the Federal must prevail, there should therefore be one Nigeria Police Force which should serve both Federal and Regional purposes”.<sup>220</sup>

The principle of regionalising the police force was rejected and the major recommendations of the 1958 constitutional conference, which were incorporated in the 1960, and subsequently

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<sup>216</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>217</sup> NAK, No. CO554/1531, Chief Secretary, Lagos to Secretary of State, London, 30.August.1958, 6

<sup>218</sup> Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria*, 155.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Harry Willink Commission of Inquiry into Minority Fears in 1958, Chapter 14

1963 constitutions provided for the federal control of the NPF. This defined the status and functions of the Nigeria Police Council and the Police Service Commission.<sup>221</sup>

### **4.3. Missed Opportunities, the State of Play and the Way Forward**

The conferences of the late 1950s were not to be the last time Nigerians debated the structure and control of police forces. In 1979, following 13 years of military rule, the then Military Head of State, General Olusegun Obasanjo fulfilled the promise of his assassinated predecessor General Murtala Muhammed and returned the country to civil rule. Part of the build-up to 1979 was the process of writing a new constitution. In contrast to the First Republic, Nigeria had jettisoned the Westminster parliamentary style for the American presidential system. The Constitution Drafting Committee (1975-1976) and the Constituent Assembly (1977-1978) became new platforms for continuing the debates on the decentralisation of the Nigeria Police Force. By the 1970s, states (first created in 1967) had replaced regions as the second tier of Nigeria's federal system and the proponents of decentralisation argued that if state governments were allowed to run police forces, it would be easier to control crime and maintain law and order.<sup>222</sup> The opponents of decentralisation were quick to cite the first republic scenario, when the Local Government Police in the west and the Native Administration Police in the north were accused of aiding and abetting crime, political thuggery and murder.<sup>223</sup> As was the case in the late 1950s, the 1979 constitution maintained the centralised Federal Police. In section 194, it was outlined in the constitution that: "There shall be a police force for Nigeria which shall be styled the Nigeria Police Force and subject to the provisions of the section, no other Police Force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof."<sup>224</sup> The same wordings were reproduced in the 1999 Constitution as Nigeria was embarking on another transition from military to civil rule, this time recreated as Article 214, (1), retaining the same laws and missing another opportunity to reform the structures of the police. The 1999 constitution still maintained a somewhat confusing provision, which seemed to give state governors authority to direct deployment of the police when such action is considered necessary to secure public order and public safety, and mandated the commissioner of police to comply. The same section then provides a caveat allowing the commissioner of police to request for further directions from Abuja:

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<sup>221</sup> Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria*, 358.

<sup>222</sup> Interview with Chief S.D. Lar, Langtang, Plateau state, 10.09.2010, also see David Jemibewon, *The Nigerian Police in Transition: issues, problems, and prospects*, (Ibadan: Spectrum, 2002), 80.

<sup>223</sup> Jemibewon, *The Nigerian Police*, 80.

<sup>224</sup> The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1979, Section 194, p.64.

Subject to the provisions of this section, the Governor of a state or such Commissioner of the Government of the state as he may authorise in that behalf, may give to the Commissioner of Police of that state such lawful directions with respect to the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order within the state as he may consider necessary, and the Commissioner of Police shall comply with those directions or cause them to be complied with: Provided that before carrying out any such directions under the foregoing provisions of this subsection the Commissioner of Police may request that the matter be referred to the President or such minister of the Government of the Federation as may be authorised in that behalf by the President for his directions.<sup>225</sup>

There is no doubt that the problems created by such contradictory provisions have influenced the operational effectiveness of the police. For instance, on occasions of sectarian violence, state governors are held accountable as they are regarded as ‘chief security officers’ of their states. In practice, such accountability is vague, as the governors are wont to give excuses of not having control and responsibility over the police. This is despite the fact that there have been cases where the state governors were clearly culpable because of their actions and in some cases inaction. Unfortunately, they have regularly hid under the guise of lacking constitutional control over the police.<sup>226</sup> Alternatively, in the wake of incessant crime and in some cases severe deterioration of security, state governors have resorted to setting up ad-hoc interagency task forces. Seen as a throwback to the years of military rule, recruitments for the task forces are usually drawn from the military (army, navy, air force) and the police. Over the years, this state-level strategy of ‘policing by task force’ has been replicated in all the 36 states of the federation. For example, Operation Zaki (lion), Borno state; Operation Flush, Lagos state; Operation Kunama (scorpion), Adamawa state; Operation Watch, Kwara state; Operation Checkmate, Ekiti state; and Operation Purge, Anambra state, are a few examples of this practice. The monopoly of policing responsibilities by the central government of Nigeria has contributed to the inability of the Nigerian government to resolve lingering security challenges. Few would doubt that if the Nigeria Police Force is to engender trust and improve

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<sup>225</sup> The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, Section 215, article 4 and 5,

<sup>226</sup> Such examples are Joshua Dariye Governor of Plateau state, (1999-2007) and More recently Isa Yuguda, current Governor of Bauchi state.



on the way it carries out its duties, there are many other areas that would require drastic reform and change.<sup>227</sup>

Calls for an expanded (employ more policemen) reinvigorated (improve working conditions, and training) Nigeria Police Force as the somewhat sole panacea for achieving better policing, are missing the point, that the main challenge is the centralisation of the police. This centralisation and unification of command has proven to be not efficient in policing a federal state like Nigeria. One cannot argue against improving the conditions of service of police officers and officers, but to adequately police societies as complex and heterogeneous as is the case in Nigeria we need to decentralise the Police. Ekeh makes the point convincingly:

...the Nigerian Police Force cannot cope with the expansive and security needs of Abuja and all state capitals; deal with the severe domestic security circumstances of such major cities as Lagos, Kano, Ibadan, Onitsha, Warri, Port Harcourt, Kaduna, (and indeed more recently Maiduguri); and then still take care of the domestic security need of small towns and villages that are now bearing the brunt of armed robbery and severe forms of crime.<sup>228</sup>

What is required is a system that incorporates a multi-layered policing system as against the current unified policing structure, this is a combined legacy of colonial history and a legacy from Nigeria's many years of military dictatorships. Areas of responsibility regarding crime, law and order are designated into federal, state and local governments. Unfortunately, at any point where the idea of decentralising the police force is muted the proponents of a continued unified police force are quick to recapitulate the experiences of the colonial period and the First Republic.<sup>229</sup> We are continuously reminded of the atrocities of the Native Authority Police, 'that a leopard does not change its spots': politicians will not allow the police to function professionally.<sup>230</sup> This argument is stale. While there is no doubt that some state governors will indeed play politics with the police, it is equally not in doubt that some

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<sup>227</sup> There is a large body of reports and studies from the stables of The Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria (CLEEN) leading Nigeria NGO on police research and advocacy work in Nigeria. CLEEN has led the way in driving police reform, unfortunately the evidence show that not much has been achieved.

<sup>228</sup> Peter Ekeh, A Review of HRW's and CLEEN's Report – The Bakassi Boys: The Legitimization of Murder and Torture – On State Sponsored Vigilante Groups in Nigeria, (Urhobo Historical Society, 2002) <http://www.waado.org/nigerdelta/documents/ConstitutionalMatters/PoliceVigilante/ReviewBakassiBoys-Ekeh.html>

<sup>229</sup> For example, see I.C. Chukwuma and Etannibi E.A. Alemika, Analysis of Police and Policing in Nigeria, (CLEEN Foundation Lagos), 10.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

governors will equally use the police professionally, to secure the safety of citizens and maintain law and order. The evidence to back up this statement could be likely generated from a performance index study of Nigerian states. There are 36 states and unfortunately, the major missing link is the absence of a robust unbiased measurement of performance among Nigerian states. A simple look at the governance and performance indices of Nigerian states as units, since 1999, will reveal the difference in the performance of state governors. In other words, we cannot continue to analyse Nigeria in strict negative analysis ignoring other constituted elements. When there is an expansion of police formations in Nigeria, some state and local police structures may fail, but others may prove to be successful. After all this is the consequence of a federal system.<sup>231</sup>

While these debates were going on at the national level, a different kind of plurality has been evolving at the micro level, this process of an evolving and institutionalised form of micro plurality is not divorced from events and policy decisions at the macro level. The development and institutionalisation of micro plurality owes much to the interface between the different levels of government; national, state (provincial), and local. Hence, the path to understanding micro plurality takes us into two extended spheres.<sup>232</sup> The first understands the broad historical origins of micro plural policing. This extends from the last two decades of British colonialism and is particularly significant because it helps make the local events of the period intelligible, and, principally, because it shapes the unfolding course of policing and the process of change it undergoes. Secondly, the interface between the macro and micro levels of government seeks to draw a critical link between events and policy decisions at the macro level and their impacts and in some instances, the unintended local consequences of such policies.

#### **4.4. Indirect Rule and the Institutionalisation of Paramount Chieftaincy: the Origins of Plural Policing**

In the literature that analyses the historical development of plural policing practice in Nigeria, key landmarks are singled out: the civil war (1967-1970) and its aftermath in the early 1970s; the impact of the Bretton Woods Institutions inspired Structural Adjustment Programme (1986 to the early 1990s); and the period since Nigeria's return from military to civil rule in

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<sup>231</sup> Peter Ekeh, A Review of HRW's and CLEEN's Report – The Bakassi Boys...

<sup>232</sup> This is analysed by using the extended case method of data analysis, for more on this please see methodology chapter.

1999.<sup>233</sup> The insights generated from my research also show that the end of the civil war coincided with another important administrative reform, which had a strong impact on the emergence of plural policing in Plateau State. This was the dismantling of the Native Authority Police, one of the earliest components of Nigeria's plural policing landscape. I recognise and analyse the significance of these landmark periods to the historical trajectory of vigilante practice in particular and other forms of the plural policing within the area of study. However, to fully understand these trajectories of plural policing, we need to go further back. The introduction of plural policing in Plateau Province can only be firmly grasped when we consider the implementation of the British Indirect Rule policy in the Plateau Province. The practical manifestation of Indirect Rule is the introduction of Native Administration, through the Native Authority first in the Northern Emirates, and then gradually to other parts of the country with varying levels of success.<sup>234</sup>

Scholarly analysis of the Native Authority (NA) system has emerged with varied opinions. Whitaker, in one of the earliest publications and perhaps a conservative take conforming to modernisation thinking of the period argues that the NAs are to be seen as necessary participants in the process of transformation, a symbiosis of tradition and modernity.<sup>235</sup> In other words, political developments did not take a linear process from “traditional” to “modern”; rather it was a complex fusion of both elements, and in creating a form of transformation something new emerges, which cannot be described as traditional, but cannot be said to be modern either. Dudley takes a different approach, arguing that the NA System disrupted the transformation process, arguing that the political authorities at the time were not receptive and adaptable to change and found useful tools in the Native Authorities.<sup>236</sup> Dudley situates his analysis in the context of late colonial Nigeria and the early years of independence, within the roles the Native Authorities played during party politics. Dudley's main contention was that because of the funds the NAs controlled at the time they were able to intervene at the local level in support of the parties of the state, and that they were actively

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<sup>233</sup> This is marking Nigeria's return to civil rule after almost two decades of military rule.

<sup>234</sup> For a detailed analysis on the implementation of the indirect rule policy in other parts of Nigeria see; Adiele E. Afigbo, *The Warrant Chief: Indirect Rule in South Eastern Nigeria, 1891 – 1929*, (New York: Humanities Press, 1972). J.A. Atanda, *The New Oyo Empire: Indirect Rule and Change in Western Nigeria, 1894 -1934*, (London, Longman: Ibadan History Series, 1973). P.A. Igbafe, *Benin Under British Administration: The Impact of Colonial Rule of an African Kingdom, 1897 – 1938*, (New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1979)

<sup>235</sup> C.S. Whitaker, *The Politics of Tradition: Continuity and Change in Northern Nigeria 1946-1969* (Princeton University Press, 1970), 31.

<sup>236</sup> Billy J. Dudley, *Parties and Politics in Northern Nigeria* (London: Frank Cass, 1968), 63.

involved in political mobilisation, coercion and oppression of all opposition. Furthermore, a system that situates so much power and control in an individual (an Emir or a Chief), placing high stakes on loyalty above all other thinking, is anything but transformative.<sup>237</sup> Perhaps the most enlightening take on the Native Authorities is the viewpoint of Yahaya, in his study titled “*The Native Authority System in Northern Nigeria, 1950-1970*”. The Native Authority is regarded as a political organism with corporate self-interest and an institution for the making and application of law at the local level.<sup>238</sup> Yahaya rightly argues that,

...to speak of N.A. interest implies that it is not simply an institution of local government, but an organizational manifestation of a social force in society. As a political institution, it will (sic) be expected to maintain law and order, to balance interests among the social forces, and to supervise the allocation of resources in the society. It is in this sense that the governments expected the N.As to function; however, they have been seen to act inconsistently. The discrepancy between the stipulated roles and the actual performance of the N.A. may not be fully understood until it is conceived as an organization of social force.<sup>239</sup>

The NA as social force is an institutional interest group, composed of members of various social groups. At the local base, we find the traditional ruling class, which includes the Emir or Chief, the District heads, the village heads, titled officials, and employees of the Native Authority.<sup>240</sup> In this study also included is the enforcement arm, the police.

The Native Authority Ordinance enacted in 1933 had clearly spelt out the duties and responsibilities of Native Authorities. Section 4 of the Ordinance, on Duties and Powers of Native Authorities states that:

It shall be the duty of every native authority to perform the obligations by this ordinance imposed and generally to maintain order and good government in the area over which his authority extends and for the fulfilment of this duty he shall have and exercise over the natives

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid., 63-64.

<sup>238</sup> A.D. Yahaya, *The Native Authority System in Northern Nigeria, 1950-1970*, (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1980), 4-5.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid., 5.

residing or being in such area or such other persons as the Governor may by Order in Council declare to be subject to such powers the powers by this Ordinance conferred in addition to such powers as may be vested in him by virtue of any law or native custom for the time being in force.<sup>241</sup>

Furthermore, section 6, sub-section 1 and 2 are clear on the powers given the native authority, specifically the police concerning crime prevention, and the authority to arrest and prosecute suspected criminals.<sup>242</sup> Section 8 gives the native authority, amongst other things, the right to issue orders within its area of jurisdiction regarding:

- a) Prohibiting, restricting, or regulating the manufacture, distillation, sale, transport, distribution, supply, sale and consumption of liquor.
- b) Prohibiting, restricting, and regulating the carrying and possession of weapons.
- c) Prohibiting any act or conduct, that in the opinion of the native authority might cause a riot, a disturbance, or a breach of the peace.<sup>243</sup>

In establishing Native Authorities, the Ordinance gave the Governor complete authority to establish Native Authorities by notice published in the Gazette. Furthermore, section 3(1) also gave the Governor powers to prescribe the manners by which such authorities were constituted and to direct that any native authority to be subordinate to any other native authority in such manner as he may think fit.<sup>244</sup> Following the enactment of the Ordinance an amended list of Native Authorities were appointed in January 1934. In Plateau Province there were five (5) Divisions, namely Jema'a; Jos; Pankshin; Shendam; and Southern Division. There were over forty (40) Native Authorities across these Divisions. Jos had 15, Pankshin had 18 NAs, Jema'a Division had 4, and Shendam and Southern Divisions had 3 each.<sup>245</sup> In May 1937 the Yan Doka of the Jos Division, formerly known as the Yan Doka Hausa Force

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<sup>241</sup> NAK, 1/29/225 Native Authority Ordinance, 1933, 4.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>245</sup> NAK, 16062/222, Native Authority Ordinance: Secretary, Northern Provinces to the Hon. Chief Secretary, Lagos. January 1934.

was re-organised into a provincial headquarters unit, and divided into four companies in Jos and environs, and one company in Bukuru.<sup>246</sup>

In his work on the formation of a political ruling class in the former colonial Plateau Province, Mangvwat shows how the Native Authority in Plateau Province represented the colonial state at the grass root level, instituting a regime of social control that was concerned with the maintenance of law and order through the use of local chiefs, colonial police, courts, and prisons.<sup>247</sup>

The forebear of the Police in Northern Nigeria was the Royal Niger Constabulary (RNC), established in 1886. The RNC was the enforcement arm of the Royal Niger Company, principally founded to secure and advance British commercial - and imperial - interests in the territories of what became Northern Nigeria. The Royal Niger Constabulary played a vital role in forcefully suppressing the discontent of the 'natives', allowing George Goldie's Royal Niger Company to carry on with the task of advancing British colonial interests.<sup>248</sup>

By the early twentieth century, as colonial conquest took shape in the Northern territories, parts of the Royal Niger Constabulary naturally evolved into a colonial government police force. However, by 1907 a colonial policy to re-organise the police was already in place. The official reasons given for this re-organisation was the lack of coherence in police oversight - referred to then as the 'dual control' of the police, which was exercised by the Resident Officers on the one hand, and the Chiefs of Constabulary on the other. It was argued that this system led to a multiplication of duties, and misconception of authority.<sup>249</sup> There were however more reasons beyond the official narrative. Rotimi rightly argues that it was principally to win the support of the northern emirs, as it permitted them to use their indigenous palace guards (*dogarai*) as police. Secondly, the policy was in line with the emerging colonial administrative policy shift from 'rule through native chiefs to rule through native chiefs on native lines'.<sup>250</sup> In fact the then High Commissioner of the Northern Region of Nigeria and Fredrick Lugard's successor, Percy Girouard, in a memo sent out to the

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<sup>246</sup> NAK, 468/208 Jos Native Administration Yan Doka Force-Duties of, May 1937.

<sup>247</sup> Monday Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation in the Plateau Province of Nigeria, 1002-1960, The Genesis of a Ruling Class*, (Durham: CAP African World Series, 2014), 31.

<sup>248</sup> For more on this see Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria...*

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid*, 51-56.

<sup>250</sup> Rotimi, *The police in a Federal State...*, 14.

Provinces on the issue of police reorganisation, among other things acknowledged how in his opinion, the previous policy had been inappropriate:

When we took over the Northern Provinces five years ago we had no knowledge of their native government. Their police and prisons appeared both inadequate and cruelly oppressive. There rose therefore the necessity of giving Residents some force of police of a trained character to assist them in gradually evolving order out of chaos in native government. After several years' experience and guidance of Native Administration, it became clear that in the north and Mohammedan (sic) communities, a native police organisation not only existed but was undoubtedly the best way of dealing with criminals of an ordinary class.<sup>251</sup>

Significantly, this turning point marked the official recognition of local palace guards as Native Authority Police, starting in Kano and expanding to other parts of the northern territories in 1908.<sup>252</sup> The Native Authority Police Force quickly gained traction and became quite prestigious in the northern emirates. This was, as Rotimi<sup>253</sup> explains, because of a specific scheme that involved members of the ruling houses. The princely-liaison officer scheme as it was called had at its core the idea of choosing the Native Authority Police leader from among the princes of the emirate. Involving the aristocracy did not just make the new force acceptable; it also provided much needed social legitimacy. The introduction and implementation of the scheme owed its success to the elevation of H.R. Palmer as Lieutenant Governor of the Northern region (1925-1930). The significance of Palmer's influence on Northern Nigerian administration at the time and the long-lasting legacies of the policies he implemented deserve close attention, because this had a direct impact on the NAPF and policing in general.<sup>254</sup>

Palmer had been trained as an English barrister and joined the colonial service in 1904, his first posting was to Northern Nigeria at the time Fredrick Lugard was High Commissioner of the Northern Nigeria Protectorate. Palmer was sent to Katsina, where he was credited with a

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<sup>251</sup> SNP Zaprof. 5193/1908, Memo on Police Reorganization by the High Commissioner, Percy Girouard, 1908.p.1 Quoted from Ahire, P.T. (1991) Imperial Policing... 42.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>253</sup> Kemi Rotimi, "Ennobling the Police: The 1928 Princely-Liaison Officer Scheme and its Aftermath" in *Northern Nigeria: A Century of Transformation, 1903-2003*, A.M. Yakubu, I.M. Jumare, A.G. Saeed, eds. (Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna, 2005), 163-164.

<sup>254</sup> For a more detail profile on the colonial carrier of Sir H.R. Palmer see Asmau'u G. Saeed, Asmau'u, "Sir Herbert Richmond Palmer and the establishment of Colonial Rule, 1904-1930" in *Northern Nigeria: A Century of Transformation, 1903-2003*, A.M. Yakubu, I.M. Jumare, A.G. Saeed, eds. (Arewa House, Ahmadu Bello University, Kaduna, 2005), 142-160.

reorganisation of the district system, by creating more districts that allowed for effective grassroots administration. He also effected dynastic changes in the emirates of Katsina and Daura, re-instating the pre-jihad Hausa dynasty in Daura.<sup>255</sup> The paths of Lugard and Palmer were to cross again in 1912 when Lugard returned to Nigeria as Governor of the Northern and Southern Protectorates. Another area where Palmer was a colonial trailblazer was his role in the institutionalisation of the Native Treasury System.<sup>256</sup> One of the early challenges the British had despite the introduction of indirect rule in Northern Nigeria was the lack of enough funds that would enable them run the administration of the region effectively. Indirect rule went a long way to solve the challenge of insufficient work force, but the challenge of generating revenue remained unresolved after conquest until 1908. Saeed concisely captures the role Palmer played:

...the Native Revenue Proclamation of April 1906, which codified and legalised the various customary taxes, fixed fifty percent (50%) of all the tax returns to Government and limited the amount which could be levied. The first colonial Native Treasury in Northern Nigeria was established by Palmer at Katsina in 1908. He persuaded the Emir Muhammadu Dikko, (Whom Palmer had appointed) to provide a Budget for the expenditure of his (50%) share of the revenue and to convert his staff into salaried officials...In 1909; the Native Treasury was sanctioned by Governor Girouard and introduced into Kano, the richest emirate, by its newly appointed Resident C.L. Temple. Henceforth the Native Treasury or *Baitulmali*, which regulated the expenditure of the traditional rulers annually, was introduced all over the Northern Provinces. Indeed, in 1917 there were fifty separate Native Treasuries in the Northern Provinces with aggregate revenue of Four Hundred and Forty One Thousand Pounds (441,000.00). Their reserve funds stood at 255,600. By 1936, the number of Native Treasuries had risen to sixty-three.<sup>257</sup>

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<sup>255</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid., 146. A treasury system had already existed in northern Nigerian emirates, what was new however was the simplified codification of the existing taxes and apportioning of part of it to the colonial government.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., 147.



The challenge of funding colonial administration in Nigeria was however to continue. As Anthony Kirk-Greene reflects,<sup>258</sup>

the biggest brake on progress, human as well as physical, in colonial Africa during the inter-war period was the palpable lack of funds. It was not until the British government changed its policy and introduced the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts of 1942 and 1945, demonstrating that it was at last ready to grant money to the African governments rather than go on expecting them to raise the money locally for every new building or road...the colonial administration at last had real money to spend...<sup>259</sup>

Of closer relevance to this study is the role Palmer played in the institutionalisation of the local palace guards (*Dogarai* – *Sing, Dogari*.) The *Dogarai* or palace guards date back to the Hausa city-states; they were recruited from amongst slaves. John Smith describes how in Kano emirate, the children of slaves were brought up as children of the household within the palace, enjoying all the privileges that came with such a status.<sup>260</sup> It was while Palmer was Assistant Resident in Katsina that he began campaigning and actively advocating for the use of the *Dogarai* as local police.<sup>261</sup> It was under his watch and direction as Lieutenant Governor of the Northern Region that the NA police was reorganised. At face value, Palmer's goal was to eliminate unsatisfactory personnel, induce the best men to join, provide training and ensure improved organisation and control.<sup>262</sup> Beyond the desire for credibility and efficiency, Palmer saw this reorganisation as the culmination of a long sought campaign to actually exclude the government police from the emirates.<sup>263</sup>

Palmer served in important Northern Nigerian colonial positions, first as Assistant Resident officer in Katsina, then as Resident of the prestigious Kano emirate, and Bornu. Palmer was one of the more loyal prodigies of Lugard and a staunch advocate of the indirect rule system.<sup>264</sup> Having served for over a decade in crown service Palmer had several ideas of how he wanted to make the NAs more inclined to achieving the objectives of government while leaving the emirs still in control, or rather feeling in control. In the eyes of the people, they

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<sup>258</sup> Kirk-Greene served as a British colonial political officer in Northern Nigeria, after independence he taught briefly in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in Nigeria before proceeding to Oxford University, where he has had quite a distinguished academic carrier.

<sup>259</sup> Anthony Kirk-Greene, *Symbol of Authority: The British District Officer in Africa*, (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2006), 13.

<sup>260</sup> John Smith interviewed by Jimam Lar, Cheltenham, UK, August 2013.

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 147.

<sup>262</sup> Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*...23-24.

<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>264</sup> Saeed, "Sir Hubert Richmond Palmer"...

governed the emirs and some important chiefs were seen as very powerful. Last argues that among the emirates there was clearly a degree of continuity between the Sokoto Caliphate and the colonial caliphate, and asserts that the emirs had power and influence. It was also clear that the British could not have governed Northern Nigeria on their own. The *Nasara*<sup>265</sup> were not all powerful, or able to do what they wished, asserts Murray Last.<sup>266</sup> The NAs developed over time, from 1903 – 1960 – and they controlled the daily lives of the people. In an interview with a former colonial political officer, an account of his first meeting with the Emir of Kano reveals how even a junior *Nasara* was looked down upon by the Emirs.<sup>267</sup>

On the other hand, the British helped extend the Caliphate in terms of political rulership. Last makes the point that:

...in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the deep rural areas on especially the southern frontiers of colonial *Dar al-Islam* were still places where local *masu sarauta*<sup>268</sup> and their *sarakai*<sup>269</sup> could be very oppressive towards non-Muslim groups within their territory. Many of these new villages and district heads were outsiders, appointed from the emirate or provincial capital, and spoke Hausa rather than any local language. Areas that had once resisted the jihadi forces now found themselves under the descendants of those same jihadi leaders. In this sense, the ‘Colonial Caliphate’ was extended by the *Nasara* over a much wider territory than ever before; with Hausa becoming the lingua franca of this enlarged ‘Caliphate’.<sup>270</sup>

#### 4.4.1. Chiefs and the Native Authority Police in the Plateau Province

Convinced of this new system of policing in the Northern Nigerian emirates there was no going back. The colonial administrators began to consider implementing it in the more decentralised, acephalous southern Provinces of the then Protectorate of Northern Nigeria.

<sup>265</sup> Hausa term for white men, used to refer to white rule *Mulkin Nasara*

<sup>266</sup> For a more outlined discussion on this point see Last, M., “1903 Revisited”, 61-94.

<sup>267</sup> John Smith, Interviewed by Jimam Lar, Cheltenham, United Kingdom, 17.08.2013. It should however be noted that the case and example made here constitutes an exception. Slavery within the Hausa Emirates was on a large proportion and subjected the peoples of the central Nigerian area to severe suffering. For more on this see Paul E. Lovejoy and Jan S. Hogendorn, *Slow Death for Slavery: The Course of Abolition I Northern Nigeria, 1897-1936*, (Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Lovejoy, Paul E. Lovejoy, ed. *Slavery on the Frontier of Islam*, (Princeton: Mark Wiener Publications, 2004).

<sup>268</sup> Hausa term for Aristocrats, or royals.

<sup>269</sup> Hausa term for emirs, or rulers.

<sup>270</sup> Last, “1903 Revisited”, 77.

This was against the advice of local administrative officers, principally because there was largely no existing culture of *Dogarai* among these groups.<sup>271</sup> Eventually the NA police in these areas was filled with non-indigenes, largely from the northern Hausa groups.<sup>272</sup> Between the late 1930s and the early 1940s, NA police were operating across the length and breadth of the Northern region. As Rotimi notes, in the Hausa emirates they had metamorphosed from being the personal staff of the chiefly authorities in pre-colonial times, with no fixed remuneration, to stipendiary officials of the Native Administration.<sup>273</sup>

In the aforementioned southern Provinces inhabited by the acephalous groups or decentralised societies,<sup>274</sup> however, a dynamic emerged and it created problems on two fronts. Firstly, the local colonial administrative officers who were daily relating to these people recognised the challenges, because of the introduction of the centralised emirate-like system among groups that were previously loosely organised socio-politically along clan structures, with priest chief-like figures at the clan level providing juridical and spiritual guidance. In this case, it should not be forgotten that the core reason for the success, or rightly put perceived relative success of indirect rule amongst the emirates of northern Nigeria was the presence of an existing aristocratic ruling class, from the time of the *Habe Sarki Sarauta*<sup>275</sup> system to the Caliphate installed Fulani emirates. Under the Sokoto Caliphate the major changes, apart from the obvious dynastic changes from Hausa to Fulani ruling clans, included the introduction of strict Islamic legal code of conduct, and the Caliphate established an empire like system of emirates (separate political units), but the substance of paramountcy had evolved and developed over a long period of Hausa rule.<sup>276</sup> John Smith, District Officer Kabba in the mid-1960s, re-echoes this point; having previously undertaken several tours in the northern emirates, he describes how contrasting he found NA council meetings of the Igala and the Igbirra. To buttress the point I quote him at length.

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<sup>271</sup> Rotimi, *The Police*, 20. In interviews with former colonial officers who had served amongst the non-Muslim groups of the then northern Nigeria, this point was reiterated.

<sup>272</sup> Ali Dakshang, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Dadur, 4.09.2012

<sup>273</sup> Rotimi, *The Police*, 20

<sup>274</sup> In using these terms, we should be reminded of Southall's enduring point that categories of centralised and decentralised political systems should not be seen as the only models of understanding pre-colonial African political systems. Using the case of the Alur, he shows us that there are stations in-between. See, Aidan Southall, *Alur Society*, (Cambridge: Heffers, 1956)

<sup>275</sup> This refers to the pre-jihad Hausa ruling families in the different Hausa city-states.

<sup>276</sup> This information was mentioned to me in conversation with Professor Murray Last. This was at the British Library London, August 2013.

The striking differences for me as a Nasara just posted from Kaduna was the fact that the *Igala and Igbirra* Chiefs just did not have the same status and backing of the northern emir. They had not grown up in this system; it was still very new to them. No one had groomed them for years in a *sarauta* (royalty) culture. So even when dealing with me as the district officer it was more open. For example, I found that there was a much greater independence of council members. There was more discussion and greater debate and less of this *haka nan nai rankadade* (Hausa phrase meaning to respond in consent to a superior), that you found in the emirate councils. In other words, in much of the Middle Belt heads of departments could be relied upon to be in charge. This was not the case in the Northern NAs, where there would be few head of departments who were very strong and powerful and knew what they were doing. In a council meeting in the emir's presence, they would continually respond with *haka nan ne rankadade*. However, the moment you left – off they go to see the Waziri, Madaki or one of the emir's close advisers. Therefore, you never knew if you had achieved anything or not, as several requests for amendments and changes would come after the meeting.<sup>277</sup>

Among the different Plateau ethnic groups, the transition to a powerful paramount chief-like figure was resisted in most communities and the balance of stability and instability was precarious. To make this clear, it should be understood that the polities or ethnic groups of the Plateau, prior to British rule, did not constitute single political units. So while the Berom, Ngas, Goemai, Mwaghavul, Eggon, and Tarok for example, were in their own right ethnic polities with particular common languages and shared cultural practices, several separate independent political units constituted each group.<sup>278</sup>

Thus, according to Mangvwat,

... among the Berom there were the separate independent polities of Du, Zawan, Fan, Gyel, Forum, Vwang, Kuru, excetra. Among the Mwaghavul there were the independent polities of Pianya (Panyam), Kerang, Pushit, Bwonpe, Mpang, Mangun,

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<sup>277</sup> John Smith, interview by Jimam Lar, Cheltenham, United Kingdom, 17.08.2013.

<sup>278</sup> Mangvwat, "Warfare on the Jos Plateau" 115.

Kombun, etcetera. Among the Ngas, there were the Dawaki, Kabwir, Tuwan, Per, Ampang, Garram, Wokkos, etc.<sup>279</sup>

Among the Tarok, there were the Bwarat, Sa'a, Che, Lagan, Jat, Laka, Gyang, Pe, Lohmak, Gbak, Singha, etc. Each of these small polities<sup>280</sup> of a particular ethnic group had their own priest chief, or system of socio-political organisation. Therefore, when paramountcy is mentioned in this context of the Plateau Province, it refers to the British ambition to have a single overall chief for the Angas, Mwaghavul, and Tarok for example. This is what the policy of indirect rule set out to achieve amongst the ethnic polities of the Plateau.

#### **4.4.2. The "Lugardian" vs The "Cliffordian" Ideologies of Native Administration**

In the Annual Report of 1932,<sup>281</sup> the Resident Officer of Plateau Province noted how difficult it was to establish the principle of indirect rule among communities who hitherto had no paramount chiefly institution. In Plateau Province, there were three exceptions<sup>282</sup> where centralised emirate structures existed. Between 1908 and 1934, different schemes of Native Authority rule were tried within the area of study, but none succeeded. The Plateau area and its environs became a lab of testing colonial policy, but as previously observed it also became a ground for the clash of competing colonial ideologies. Mangvwat identifies four major phases in the development of the Native Authority System on the Plateau, based on the principles of indirect rule. The first phase, already alluded to, was the policy of creating paramount chiefs with full colonial powers. It was more or less a transplanting of the emirate system and it coincided with Lugard's rule as Governor of amalgamated Nigeria. For the basic reason that this system tried to create bigger chiefdoms from the numerous groups across the Plateau area, without any pre-existing basis or justification, was enough to lead to its ultimate collapse and failure.<sup>283</sup> An example of this policy applied in Plateau Province was to the Yergam (Tarok) people. Following the British conquest of the lowlands of what became Plateau Province, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Tarok were initially, albeit for a short spell administratively under the Emir of Wase. However, it soon became clear that this was an

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<sup>279</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>280</sup> I prefer to use polities but could have also been termed as clans as there are lineage links amongst such groups and communities.

<sup>281</sup> NAK. JosProf. 2/24/11/1932, Annual Report, Plateau Province 1931, 2<sup>nd</sup> March 1932.

<sup>282</sup> The exceptions were Jema'a, and Wase where there was some semblance of a centralised paramount chieftaincy when indirect was introduced in the Plateau Province.

<sup>283</sup> Monday Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation in the Plateau Province of Nigeria, 1902-1960, The Genesis of a Ruling Class*, (Durham: CAP African World Series, 2014), 40.

unworkable arrangement, as although there were trade relations, there was no prior history of rulership or subordination of any sort.<sup>284</sup> Wase emirate was by the stroke of a pen given administrative responsibility over areas where it had no traditional authority. The Tarok were granted an independent district in 1926 and Sarkin Langtang Datyem was appointed Chief of the Yergam (Tarok) District, with Third Grade status.<sup>285</sup> The stool did not gain paramount status until 1957.

The second phase was part of attempts by Lugard's successor, Hugh Clifford,

...correcting what he regarded as the shortcomings of the indirect rule system with respect to the creation of paramount chiefs where none had previously existed. He therefore ordered a revision of the criterion for the creation of paramount chiefs in such areas and, instead, suggested that the objective of creating bigger chiefdoms should be achieved by federating the various autonomous chiefs involved under a Chairman-chief where this was possible.<sup>286</sup>

Clifford's plan came to an abrupt end in 1925, before it was even fully implemented to its logical conclusion. This was following the departure of Clifford, a juncture that coincided with the elevation of H.R. Palmer as Lieutenant Governor of Northern Nigeria. As I have discussed in detail above, Palmer was a loyal initiate of Lugard and the staunchest of advocates for indirect rule. In fact, colonial political officers who arrived long after he was gone were still to hear the stories of his fanatically laced sermons on the merits of indirect rule.<sup>287</sup> Therefore, it was no surprise that Palmer returned to the Lugardian system. First of all Palmer carved out and formally established Plateau Province, then against the advice of several of his Divisional Officers he set out to not just to create bigger "tribal chiefs" on the Plateau, but more problematically he also sought to rationalise and legitimise the imposition of District Heads of one community over another, notably in the Jema'a and Lowland Divisions Province.<sup>288</sup> The Palmer policy came to an abrupt end in 1929 when he was posted to Gambia as Governor. While on the surface it looked like he was promoted, the relatively small colony of Gambia did not match the prestige of presiding over the vast and important Northern Region of Nigeria, of which he was obviously in awe. Palmer's tenure as lieutenant

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<sup>284</sup> JosProf 2/18/497/1926, Plateau Province Annual Report for 1926.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 40.

<sup>287</sup> John Smith, interviewed by Jimam T. Lar, Cheltenham, United Kingdom, 17.08.2013.

<sup>288</sup> Mangwat, A History of Class Formation, 40.

governor as the forgone accounts have shown was laced with bouts of conflict and infighting between Lagos and Kaduna. The Colonial Office in London, being often called upon to mediate, would have taken note.<sup>289</sup> The policy of senior colonial officers like Palmer is perhaps best captured in the thinking of John Smith, himself a very experienced colonial officer who served on multiple tours<sup>290</sup> across Northern Nigeria. For Mr. Smith, indirect rule was a necessity that was made into a dogmatic virtue.<sup>291</sup>

In 1931 the governorship of Sir Graeme Thomson, who had to deal with what he perceived as Palmer's incessant insubordination, ended.<sup>292</sup> Thomson's replacement as Governor of Nigeria was Sir Donald Cameron, Clifford's protégé and former first chief secretary (1921-1924).<sup>293</sup> Like his former boss, Cameron was a known critic of the Lugardian-Palmerian formulation and application of indirect rule.<sup>294</sup> Thereby another episode of the "Lugardian" vs "Cliffordian" feud on administering the British colony of Nigeria, particularly its Northern Region, was about to unfold. In September 1933, Cameron wrote a confidential letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Sir Philip Cunliffe-Lister, in which Cameron strongly criticised aspects of the implementation of the Lugardian system of indirect rule:

...I found Nigeria working under certain Memoranda written by Lugard many years ago, the principal one in 1917, which had become overlaid with error owing (1) to the attempt in the Northern Provinces to make the larger Native Administrations independent and throw off control by the Governor from Lagos, and (2) to the fact that Lugard's Memorandum on Native Administration was quite unsuited to the circumstances of the Southern Provinces. It was not in fact intended for the Southern Provinces but they used it because there was nothing else. I may add that in the north the pagan areas had been greatly neglected, little interest being shown in them. The policy of indirect administration in Nigeria, it soon became apparent to me, required a new spirit to be breathed into it, and as a temporary measure, I

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<sup>289</sup> I.M. Okonjo, *British Administration in Nigeria 1900-1950: A Nigerian View*, (New York: NOK Publishers, 1974), 234-235.

<sup>290</sup> A tour is an 18 months (a year and half) colonial posting usually after a maximum of two tours the officer is transferred.

<sup>291</sup> John Smith, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Cheltenham, United Kingdom, 17.08.2013.

<sup>292</sup> Discussed by Okonjo, *British Administration*, 162-163.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid*, 156.

<sup>294</sup> R Heusler, *The British in Northern Nigeria*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 64-82, quoted in Mangwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 40.

republished my Tanganyika Memorandum for the guidance of Administrative Officers here. I followed this up as you are aware, in my Annual Address to the Legislative Council in March last and the principles which I laid down in the address have received wide endorsement...I have been collecting material to write a new Memorandum on the Principles of Native Administration and their Application for Nigeria...The purpose of this letter is to enquire whether the Secretary of State would be disposed to give his approval to the principles enunciated in a new memorandum (with of course, such emendations as he might require) if I submit it for the purpose...It is of great importance to the future of Nigeria that principles and policy in this respect should be formulated in an authoritative manner; but there is little use in my doing so if my memorandum can be set on one side after my departure. I do not know if the Colonial Office ever consults Lugard in these days. If so, I should warn you that he appears to dislike my address to the Legislative Council and detests my new judicial reforms.<sup>295</sup>

Criticising Lord Fredrick Lugard on aspects of British Colonial administration at this time was still a rare occurrence. The respect and eminence in which Lugard was held in colonial circles, not just in Nigeria but also across the British Empire, was still towering. Cameron's critique is perhaps more valiant because Lugard was still alive in 1933 and still had supporters in the Colonial Office who continued to consult him until his death in 1945. In furtherance of the changes he desired to make, Cameron instituted policy changes to the existing system he found on the ground, and he had a clear articulation of his planned ideas and their application.<sup>296</sup> Following assurances from London, Cameron proceeded to articulate the changes in his Memorandum, "The Principles of Native Administration and their Application", which he authored in July 1934. Cameron states that:

...If the latter (the people) are not willing to accept the order of the so-called authority, chief or otherwise, unless we compel them to do so then, of course, the administration is not indirect and the Native

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<sup>295</sup> CO/583/191/3 Donald Cameron, Governor of Nigeria to Secretary of State, 28<sup>th</sup>.09.1933

<sup>296</sup> For more on this see Donald Cameron, *The Principles of Native Administration and their Application*, (Lagos, 1934).



Authority set up on such basis is a shame and a snare...The Native Authority that is not acceptable to the people and is maintained only because we imposed it on them is therefore almost certainly bound to fail and it would be better to endeavour in the first instance to administer the people directly.<sup>297</sup>

As Mangvwat aptly notes,

Cameron's conception and application of indirect rule as a system of local government centred on the ability of the colonial officers to identify and find the loci of pre-colonial political authorities within and amongst the various communities and peoples of Nigeria through whom colonial political authority should mediate to the subjects.<sup>298</sup>

To achieve this, Cameron directed for a Nigeria-wide research on the nature and structures of pre-colonial political systems and institutions of the various ethnic groups identified. However, for the purposes of our inquiry I will limit the discussion of Cameron's reforms to the Plateau Province<sup>299</sup>, what Mangvwat identified as the fourth stage of colonial administration on the Plateau.<sup>300</sup> As already referred earlier, Cameron made efforts to have a policy that was informed by pre-existing structures. In a memorandum written to provide advice and guidance for colonial political officers engaged in these enquiries and research, he made very clear what he expected:

The proper way to search out the people is from the bottom. Build from the bottom; do not attempt, as I found in Nigeria when I returned there in 1931, to make, as it were, a crown or a king at the top and then try to find something underneath on which it might perhaps appropriately be placed. Begin with the people in the lower course of the structure, the family first, the extended family, and so on through the various grades right up to the authority, whatever it may be, that

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<sup>297</sup> This quote is taken from published excerpts of Cameron's Memorandum; see A.H.M. Kirk-Greene, *The Principles of Native Administration in Nigeria, Selected Documents, 1900-1947*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 198.

<sup>298</sup> Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 40. Mangvwat was quoting from Cameroons blueprint and ideology on how to reform the Native Authority Administration

<sup>299</sup> See Donald Cameron, "Pagan Administration – Notes for the guidance of Officers engaged in enquiries connected with," JOSP/PROF.1.512, NAK.

<sup>300</sup> Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 40.

they all acknowledge as the authority that has regulated the society of the unit according to their own law and custom.<sup>301</sup>

The findings of these studies formed the basis of the reorganisation of native administration in Nigeria. In the Plateau Province the substance of the reorganisation on the ground was the creation of five divisions. The Divisions did not operate like a Native Authority; rather what obtained was a Division being constituted by a federation of chiefdoms, and these chiefdoms operated like district chiefs in some cases and in some other cases like the existing emirates in the Province, where the Emirs maintained their own bureaucracy.<sup>302</sup> Despite this major breakthrough, the British could still not achieve the objective of creating paramount rulers to centrally administer all the different ethnic groups on the Plateau. This was to change in the final decade leading to independence.

In 1951, the Macpherson Constitution replaced the Richards Constitution. Among other things, the new constitution provided for a bicameral legislative system in the Northern and Western regions of the country. In the north there was the Northern House of Assembly, made up of elected representatives and open to all adult citizens of the region, but the Northern House of Chiefs on the other hand was restricted to graded traditional rulers only, graded as first, second, third and fourth class depending on the size and history of the stool.<sup>303</sup> The qualifications required for membership of this prestigious House of Chiefs implied that several of the non-emirate ethnic groups in Plateau Province, without a paramount graded chief, did not qualify for membership, thereby limiting their representation.<sup>304</sup> It was at this moment that the educated elites of the Plateau Province, in contrast to their emirate northern colleagues, collaborated with, and in some cases persuaded the traditional rulers to accept creative means of forming chiefdoms that would meet the requirements for acceptance into the House.<sup>305</sup> Mangvwat describes the process:

In order to qualify for membership in the House of Chiefs, therefore, these Plateau communities devised ways of producing chiefs of similar status and grandeur to that of the emirs of the far north. Consequently, one ethnic group after another began to organize ethnic

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<sup>301</sup> Donald Cameron, *Pagan Administration – Notes for the guidance of Officers engaged in enquiries*

<sup>302</sup> Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 41.

<sup>303</sup> Whitaker, *The Politics of Tradition*, 57. Taken from Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 176.

<sup>304</sup> Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 176

<sup>305</sup> This alliance however did not last, after the chiefs were upgraded and began to attend meetings in Kaduna, they began to see the educated elites as a threat to their power in the chiefdoms.

solidarity as the basis on which to create paramount chiefs...Even though these demands were straightforward, their articulation required some amount of literacy and knowledge of the changing times to succeed...the Christian intelligentsia, that is the educated elites, most of whom lived in the rural areas...took advantage (of the opportunity) to enhance their personal positions and fortunes.<sup>306</sup>

In order to fulfil the requirements for particular grades, different minority ethnic groups willingly joined up and made demands for federated chiefdoms. The colonial government happily obliged and thus created several sub-Native Authorities in Plateau Province. While the reforms ushered in by the Macpherson constitution can be inadvertently credited with kick starting the process that led to the peoples of the Plateau Province to actually seek for paramount chieftaincies, in the final analysis the different administrative policies had the same purpose of achieving the goals and objectives of the colonial state. Thus within a decade, paramount chiefs had been installed as result of popular demand by groups who had previously resisted, and what the British had tried to do by force and failed for over four decades had been finally achieved.<sup>307</sup>

During the colonial administration, the *Yan Doka* system amongst the ethnic groups of central Nigeria had already come under fierce criticism. In a memo to the residents of the Provinces in August 1937, the Chief Commissioner of Police was clearly concerned about the recruitment, training and efficiency of the *Yan Doka*. While he advocated for better training and improvement, he was resigned to the fact that *Yan Doka* in certain 'backward' (rural) parts would be relegated to the position of village guards.<sup>308</sup> The Divisional Officer in charge of the Shendam Division (later renamed Lowland Division) of Plateau Province was even more damning. In an assessment of *Yan Doka* in 1944, he lamented that the *Yan Doka* had failed to efficiently discharge their functions, as the force was filled with illiterate and semi-literate personnel who were little more than messengers.<sup>309</sup>

It would be instructive to put these negative assessments into context and perhaps situate them in the context of the time. As Rotimi has argued:

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<sup>306</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>307</sup> Ibid., 176-177

<sup>308</sup> NAK. SNP 147/1937, Memo to all Residents, *Yandoka*, 14 August 1937.

<sup>309</sup> NAK. No.149/231, D.O. Shendam to R.O. PlaProf. *Yandoka*, 20 March 1944.

Colonial laws and ordinances were written in English and couched in legal terms. While the few literate trainees might have had a smattering of knowledge of the laws, the majority could not have grasped the essence. Yet, they had the duty to enforce the laws and ordinances. These policemen worked in a largely illiterate society, whose members treated them as an ‘enlightened’ group. The policemen were prone to exhibit knowledge of the laws in a manner that left their victims bewildered. But the truth is that, many of them were as ignorant as their victims. The mutual ignorance was often exploited to the advantage of the policeman and the discomfiture of their victims.<sup>310</sup>

As the forgone analysis has demonstrated, while the form and nature of policing changed in regards to nomenclatures, uniforms, and structures, leaving the Native Authority police under the command and control of the traditional rulers would suggest that in the substance of governance the status quo had remained. There was, however, more to the situation than this. The colonial government’s hope that the transformation of palace guards in the service of traditional rulers into Native Authority police officers would shift the emphasis and loyalty to the public rather than royalty, could perhaps be seen as unfounded or simply lip servicing while continuing with the *status quo*. The origins and initial processes of institutionalising plural policing from a top-down perspective were coercive and damaging. However, when studied from below, from the perspective of those who served in the NAPF, and those who witnessed this period and experienced the practices, the picture does emerge with different shades. It becomes more dynamic and ambivalent. We learn that alongside coercion and oppression a certain kind of different or form of policing work was equally going on. A sustained analysis on this is provided in chapter seven. What follows now is the next era of the macro plural policing trajectory examined in this study.

#### **4.5. Local Government Reforms and the Quest for ‘Modernity’: From NAPF to Yanbanga (1970-1980)**

Having served its purpose during the colonial era, the NAPF barely survived the first decade of an independent (post-colonial) Nigeria. In 1966, the Ironsi administration set up a panel on the Nigeria Police, Local Government and Native Authority Police and Prisons. The panel’s main term of reference was to examine the “feasibility of the unification of the Nigeria Police, Local Government Police and the unification of prisons in Nigeria...”<sup>311</sup> Although General Ironsi was overthrown in a military coup in July 1966, the new military government under

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<sup>310</sup> Rotimi, *The Police*, 180.

<sup>311</sup> The Report of the Working Party on Police and Prisons Services in Nigeria, (1966) quoted from I.C. Chukwuma and Etannibi E.A. Alemika, *Analysis of Police and Policing in Nigeria*, CLEEN Foundation Lagos

General Gowon accepted the recommendations of the panel. The reforms were implemented in 1968 and the Nigeria police system was unified.<sup>312</sup> As a result, local police forces like the Local Government Police in the Western Region and the Native Authority Police in the Northern Provinces were dissolved and their qualified personnel absorbed into the Nigeria Police Force.<sup>313</sup> The paramount chiefs on the Plateau were just in the process of really consolidating their rule over the populations. Under the rule of Northern Nigeria's independence Premier, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the chiefs practically became the undisputed rulers at the local level. As long as they toed the line of the northern ruling party, they were allowed to govern their chiefdoms with little or no interference from Kaduna. This however meant they were severally engaged in political schisms with local missionary educated elites. The dismantling of the Native Authority Police, however, was just the tip of the iceberg; there were still more reforms on the way.

Peter Ekeh's<sup>314</sup> conception of the 'primordial' public finds meaning within a context where we can identify a certain group dynamic (ethnic or religious); it becomes diffused when applied in a heterogeneous context. In other words, the primordial invites us to conceive groups as homogenous, an ethnic community, and a given ethnic group with adherents congregating around a particular religion, sect or denomination. Ekeh identifies a historical dialectic between two groups contesting for legitimated authority – namely, traditional and chiefly institutions and educated elites. It must be pointed out that the roots of this dialectic can be drawn to rival policies of local administration favoured by succeeding colonial administrations analysed earlier, and represented in sum by colonial administrative ideals propounded by former colonial Governors, Fredrick Lugard (1914-1919) and Hugh Clifford (1919-1925).

Okonjo has identified the two groups of opposing ideology as protagonists and antagonists, arguing that the rivalries came to a head not just because there was a strong disagreement on which system of administration is best for the colony; more significantly, it was related to the future course of Nigerian political development.<sup>315</sup> The protagonists led by Palmer and other Northern Nigerian 'Lugardian' political officers who believed that the future of political development in Nigeria must be in the Native Administration<sup>316</sup> - the traditional rulers were

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<sup>312</sup> Chukwuma and Alemika, *Analysis of Police and Policing*, 10.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, 10

<sup>314</sup> Ekeh, "Colonialism and the two publics", *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 91-112.

<sup>315</sup> For a sustained and detailed extrapolation of this point, see Okonjo, *British Administration in Nigeria...*

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, 213.

the custodians of power in the past, indirect rule had made them custodians of power during the colonial period, and they were envisaged to continue in this role in the future. On the other side, were those who held antagonistic views towards the ideals of indirect rule as propounded by Lugard and implemented by Palmer. This group of officers considered that the only lasting benefit which British rule could confer was the development in each territory, of a type of government and judiciary modelled more or less after British institutions.<sup>317</sup> To achieve this they favoured the gradual involvement of educated Africans in the administration of the colony, as the situation permitted. For the Lugardians, the 'educated native' constituted a positive menace to his ancient society. In the fanatical manner, indirect rule was being implemented, the Nigerian, at the time no matter his intellectual state, was being asked to look backward to his past for his route to future political progress.<sup>318</sup> This was the case even amongst communities where the institution of paramouncy was anything but 'traditional.' In these communities paramouncy as developed by the indirect rule system did not necessarily create chieftaincy institutions and may therefore not be seen as invented traditions;<sup>319</sup> rather it was a process of negotiating change, involving the coloniser and the colonised that modified existing tradition.<sup>320</sup> Subsequently, in the Plateau Province the traditional rulers were striving to maintain some form of relevance amidst the policies of former educated elites turned politicians, who were bent on replacing chiefly institutions with what they regard as modern forms of administration. It is instructive now to examine some of the salient political changes that followed the collapse of the First Republic and the coming to power of the military at the national, regional and state levels.

Jonathan Reynolds<sup>321</sup> in his excellent account of the instrumentalisation of religion (Islam) in the quest for political legitimacy in Northern Nigeria from the 1950s to the late 1960s shows how the Native Administrative system became an institution of contestation. Reynolds argues convincingly that the Northern People's Congress (NPC) was the party of the elites (aristocrats, and traditional rulers), and one of their goals was the preservation of their

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid., 213.

<sup>318</sup> Ibid., 227

<sup>319</sup> Terence Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition in colonial Africa', in *The Invention of Tradition*, E.J. Hobsbawm and T.O. Ranger eds, (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 211-62.

<sup>320</sup> As Ranger himself, in a reflexive follow-up reconceptualised the notion of invented tradition as it relates to African colonialism suggesting that in its usage invention did suggest a fabrication of tradition, giving agency to colonial fiat and disregarding local processes of agency, and change. See, Ranger, T. O., 'The Invention of Tradition revisited: the Case of Africa', in *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth Century Africa*, Terence Ranger and Olufemi Vaughan eds., (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), 62-111.

<sup>321</sup> Jonathan T. Reynolds, *The Time of Politics (Zamanin Siyasa): Islam and the Politics of Legitimacy in Northern Nigeria, 1950-1960*, (Lanham and New York: University Press of America, 1999).

influence and power by safeguarding the Native Administration structures. The antithesis of the NPC was the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU). At the core of the NEPUs' political objectives was the weakening of the powers of emirs and chiefs, by extending voting rights and democratic processes to local administration, thereby replacing traditional rulers with elected officials. While this political dynamic of Northern Nigerian politics in 1950s and 1960s will be familiar to post-colonial historians of Northern Nigeria, Reynolds' analysis for instance sheds light on how the two parties sourced support by not only reconstructing the history of the Sokoto Jihad, but also appropriating it for their contemporary political capital.<sup>322</sup>

Another interesting point to draw from this intensive political battle between conservative and progressive northern Nigeria, is captured in what unfolded after the demise of one of the leading protagonists, Ahmadu Bello, who was assassinated in the January 1966 coup. Until his death, Bello had continued to strengthen the Native Administration, making sure they remained relevant in the administration of the Northern Region. The traditional rulers in return generally remained loyal to the NPC and constituted its power base. When the military government of Yakubu Gowon assembled its cabinet in mid-1966, it was to the First Republic outcast that he turned to. The pan-Nigerian first republic progressive alliance of Obafemi Awolowo, Aminu Kano, Anthony Enahoro, and Joseph Tarka were made Commissioners (Ministers) in charge of finance, health, information and transportation respectively. The four of them had been senior opposition party figures at the federal or regional levels during the first republic. As Rotimi rightly notes there would have been a high probability that they or their supporters had suffered or had been maltreated by the NAPF, particularly Aminu Kano and Joseph Tarka in the northern region.<sup>323</sup> Mr Benjamin Vencir, a former member of the Yergam Union/UMBC alliance confirmed this and agreed that it was not a coincidence that by 1969, the powers of the native administration were weakened with the dismantling of the NAPF.<sup>324</sup> The dismantling of the NAPF led to the incorporation of about 9,000 former NAPF into the NPF.<sup>325</sup>

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<sup>322</sup> Ibid.

<sup>323</sup> Rotimi, *The Police*, 127.

<sup>324</sup> Benjamin Vencir, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Langtang, 10.01.2015.

<sup>325</sup> Otwin Marenin, "Policing Nigeria: Control and Autonomy in the Exercise of Coercion", *African Studies Review*, 28, 1, (1985), 76-78., also see A.E. Gboyega and O. Oyediran, "A View from Ibadan," in K. Panther-Brick ed. *Soldiers and Oil: The Political Transformation of Nigeria*. (London: Frank Cass, 1978), 80. Taken from H.M. Carter and O. Marenin, "Law Enforcement and Political Change in Post-Civil War Nigeria." *Journal of Criminal Justice* 9, 2, (1981), 130.

The dismantling of the NA police in 1969 constituted a victory for the NPF in the northern region. Owing to its status as a federal force, the northern regional administration had consistently viewed the NPF with suspicion. The primary concern being that any form of extended influence or recognition for the NPF to oversee the affairs of the NAPF would amount to degrading the NAs. The best example that captures this tense relationship are the responses and reactions from the northern region that accompanied a 1949 Report on the future of the NAPFs in British colonies. The report was authored by the office of the Inspector-General of Colonial Police, London following a tour of the colonies. Of note for us is what the report had to say on relationship between the NAPF and the main colonial police force. The report was incriminating, and took a critical stance regarding the organisation, impartiality and efficiency of the forces.<sup>326</sup> Interestingly, as expected, the response from the northern region was the suggestion that the NAPF were far more critical to policing within the region than the NPF. To buttress this point the evidence presented highlighted the role of the NA system and its responsibility for maintaining law and order; secondly, it was also stated that the NAPF presence on the ground was three times more than the NPF – of a total number of 6,239 the NPF accounted for 1,223 and the remaining 5,016 were of the NAPF.<sup>327</sup> Accordingly, the response from Lagos to London backed the northern regional administration, thereby staying action on the NAPF.<sup>328</sup> Therefore, the dismantling of the NAPF and the subsequent absorption of some of its men into the NPF had been a long-term desire of the NPF at the federal and regional levels. The interest in dismantling the NAPF and weakening the NAs was an idea that drew support from interest groups, with grounds that are as varied as the nature and form of the interest groups. In the few decades of its existence—in some areas a few years—the NAs had indeed stepped on many toes.

The political contestation around the dismantling of the NAPF particularly played out at the regional and provincial levels. There were varied interest groups at the different levels. According to Mahmud Yakubu,<sup>329</sup> the process of emirs and chiefs losing their influence and subsequently statutory authority over local affairs initially played out at the top of the northern regional government, in the wake of the 1966 counter coup, which brought the Gowon administration to power. Although the then regional Governor, Major Hassan Usman, was a prince from the Katsina ruling house, the bureaucrats (educated elites) were able to

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<sup>326</sup> Rotimi, *The Police*, 57.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>329</sup> Mahmud A. Yakubu, "Emirs and Soldiers", 244-268.



persuade him to undertake the most dramatic onslaught yet on chiefly authority.<sup>330</sup> As Yakubu explains:

...many of the bureaucrats saw themselves as meritocratic patricians ingrained in whose psyche was a feeling, no doubt owing to their Western education, broader outlook and career experience under a British-styled civil service, that merit must come (first), before patronage. Many had been opposed to the thoroughly authoritarian nature of the administrative system, especially to those they regard as half-educated, backward-looking political appointees giving them directives based on sheer political expediency. Most of them, given the opportunity, would not hesitate to sacrifice the emirs (and chiefs) in the interest of democracy and modernisation...They saw the military administration in which they were more influential than the emirs (and chiefs) as an opportunity to correct previous anomalies.<sup>331</sup>

The military regime then set out to implement one reform after the other. Native Authority personnel were banned from taking part in partisan politics; in April 1967, all Emirs and Chiefs' courts were abolished. This included the Grade 'A' courts, which had the jurisdiction to pass capital sentences. The Governor, meeting the northern emirs and chiefs in Kaduna in April 1967 outlined some of the anomalies rectified by the judicial reforms as follows:

“1. We were the only country in the world in which there existed authorities on whom were vested the powers of legislation, adjudication and execution all at the same time;

2. We were the only country in the world in which appointments to certain executive posts would automatically place the appointees as President of a court of law of unlimited jurisdiction;

3. We were the only country in the world in which courts of law of unlimited jurisdiction might be presided over by persons who were not learned or trained in the law.”<sup>332</sup>

The irony that such admonishment was coming from a military governor was perhaps not lost on the emirs and chiefs, and they attempted at protesting and expressing their disagreement

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<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 256.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., 257.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., 259.

with the reforms. They saw the reforms as “...a subtle attempt to dilute their power, reduce their statutory authority, tarnish their institutional prestige and inflict financial constraint on the NAs which depended on court fines as part of their revenues. Above all they accused the soldiers of failing to consult them before these reforms were introduced.”<sup>333</sup> Despite these protests, the government went ahead with the reforms and the courts were merged with the regional judiciary.<sup>334</sup>

The role of Native Authorities in everyday administration was then systematically dismantled amidst local government administration reforms in 1976. The Guidelines of the 1976 Local Government Reforms were very clear in their objectives. The five main objectives were-

- To institute an enduring viable Local Government Council System. The reforms provided for a new structure of administration, providing the local governments with significant roles and functions and the powers to deliver.
- Such a system should serve as a catalyst for the development of the areas involved.
- To have local governments with a uniform structure through a one-tier system such that a local government would not be less than 150,000 citizens and not to have a population of more than 800,000.
- To insulate the exalted and respected position of traditional rulers from partisan politics. This provision reads like it is in the interest of the traditional rulers, but it must be pointed out that the spirit of the provision was rather geared towards curbing the excesses of the ‘royal fathers’. Their role was transformed from political and administrative heads of local administration to serving in advisory capacity to the chairmen of the local governments.
- The reforms were also intended to check the insistent interference of state governments in local administration as the State Governments had continued to encroach upon what would normally have been the exclusive preserve of the Local Governments.<sup>335</sup>

In Plateau Province, it was the emerging group of western/missionary educated elites that were to emerge as local government administrators after the local government reforms of the

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<sup>333</sup> Ibid., 260.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 259.

<sup>335</sup> Federal Republic of Nigeria 1976: Guidelines for Local Government Reform, Government Press, Kaduna. Also for analysis on the reforms of 1976 see J.E. Egbe, “Native Authorities and Local Government Reforms in Nigeria Since 1914”, IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 19, 3, (2014), 113 -127.

1970s.<sup>336</sup> The intense rivalry between the western educated elites and the emirs in the emirates was also replicated in the Plateau Province. The schism between the traditional rulers and the emerging educated elites began in the early 1950s and was sustained until the dismantling of the Native Authorities in 1975/76. This conflicting relationship was characterised by differing levels of intensity. In some NAs like the Langtang NA, it did become precarious, and in others like the Shendam NA, it was more controlled and managed. It would be instructive at this point to provide some detail, and instances of how this rivalry played out in the context of the former Plateau Province, Benue-Plateau State from 1967, and Plateau State from 1975.

By the late 1950s up to the early 1970s, active groups of organised educated elites constituted the major threat to the authority of the traditional rulers. This elite group<sup>337</sup> will for the purposes of our analysis be rendered here in two categories. The first category is made up of locals who had been selected from all the Northern Provinces, received special training at the newly established Administrative College in Zaria, and were subsequently appointed as Divisional Officers across the Northern Region. Several of these Nigerian ‘DOs’<sup>338</sup> came from the Plateau Province. The native authority system soon emerged as a viable career opportunity for young men; more Nigerians were appointed as Divisional Officers and Assistant Divisional Officers. A former instructor at this college had this to say about his memories of the time:

Well what happened was that you know we were all aware after World War Two and India (Indian independence) that some time independence would come for the African colonies; this was discussed amongst us political officers. There was therefore an interest in training and preparing more Nigerians, for us Northern Nigerians who could later join the civil service. This was why the Administrative College was established in Zaria, and I served a tour there as instructor.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>336</sup> For a detailed discussion of this see Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 48-83.

<sup>337</sup> Mangvwat has documented the emergence and consolidation of political power of this elite group, for a detailed analysis see Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 31-94.

<sup>338</sup> Acronym for District Officer, also used for Divisional Officer who was the most senior civil servant at the Divisional level of administration.

<sup>339</sup> John Smith, Interviewed by Jimam Lar, Cheltenham, United Kingdom, 17.08.2013.

One of those selected from Plateau Province, Selcan Miner,<sup>340</sup> in an interview recounts the reverence such a position gave individuals like him when they returned to their communities. The idea that he was holding the position of a DO, albeit in another division, was held in much awe. Miner had a distinguished civil service career beginning as Assistant District Officer, Jos Native Authority, in the late 1950s, with subsequent postings as District Officer to Gboko, Birnin Kebbi and Sokoto Divisions. The second category was made of those who had been influenced by having recently acquired western education, under the tutelage of the Sudan United Mission for the Tarok, and the Roman Catholic Mission for the Goemai. The Sudan United Mission established its major training centre in Gindiri with several educational institutions clustered together, including the Boys Secondary School and the Girls High School. A majority of the students were admitted from amongst the Plateau groups. Critically these two institutions were responsible for the embryonic grooming of future western educated Plateau elites. The graduates from Gindiri on return to their various communities were looked upon as torchbearers in the struggle for a new social order.<sup>341</sup> “Gindiri was thus, more than a center (sic) for the production of various certificates and a means to eventual employment; it was, more importantly, in essence a big ideological center (sic) in which the various certificates were only attractions.”<sup>342</sup> For the predominantly Catholic Goemai of Shendam, there were training centres in Jos, Zawan, Zonkwa and Vom. Shendam, as the political headquarters of the Goemai population, however, remained an important Catholic town with the Catholic mission station having been established in 1906 in what became the SUM (Protestant) dominated Plateau lowlands. As Mangvwat notes, though the SUM and the RCM sometimes argued on points of doctrine and spheres of influence, when it came to politics, they were solidly united. At that time, their constituency transcended the church and included all non-Muslim and non-Christian peasants.<sup>343</sup> Furthermore, the mission stations of Langtang and Shendam were more than bases for the propagation of Christianity between the Tarok and Goemai; like other mission stations in Plateau Province, such as among the Berom, Ngas, and Mwaghavul, they were also centres for political mobilisation<sup>344</sup> and conscientization of the people. However, the foremost impacts of these emerging elites on their communities were to come much later.

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<sup>340</sup> Selcan Miner, Interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos, Nigeria, 07.01.2014.

<sup>341</sup> Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 66.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

In the last decades of colonial rule, these young emerging elites had converged to form pressure groups, for example, in our research area, the Yergam Union was formed amongst the Tarok in 1950, and similar groups had been formed amongst the Berom, and Goemai. The groups aspired for ethnic-unity in pursuance of development and advancement of their communities. They embraced western education and frowned against what they referred to as ignorance {*duhunci*}. The Yergam Union {Jamiyyar Yergammawa}<sup>345</sup> was established among the Tarok in December 1950 was quite clear on its goals and objectives. Its constitution, issued in 1950, states that:

- (a) The Union is established to strengthen association and love amongst the Yergammawa wherever they are in the world; rulers, and peasants, men and women, the elderly and the young. [*Karfafa zumunci da soyayya tsakannin Yergammawa duka inda suke a cikin duniya; sarakuna da talakawa, maza da mata, manya da yara.*]
- (b) To encourage consultation with one another, amongst the Yergam so as to know what each is up to, and to understand one another. So as to come together and overcome such challenges that may be beyond a single person, or a few people. [*Son shawara da juna tsakannin kabilar Yergam domin su san ra'ayin juna, su fahimci junansu yadda za su hada karfinsu domin su yaki adinda zai fi karfin mutum daya ko biyu.*]
- (c) To shine the lamp of education and advancement onto all Yergammawa, so that they can let go of all backwardness and ignorance, and understand the world situation, and how mankind is moving towards progress so as to allow the Yergammawa to prepare them for the future. [*Haskaker fitilar ilimi da wayewar kai zuwa ga dukkan Yergammawa domin su zuba da duhun kai cikin jahilci su kuma gane abinda duniya ke ciki sa'annan su gyara zamansu.*]
- (d) To intervene in all things related to the Yergam, and to advise and guide the rulers on what we want and what we do not want. [*Sa baki cikin dukkan abinda ya shafi Bayargami ta wurin shawarta Sarakunan kasa da sauran masu mulki kan abinda muke so da wanda ba mu so.*]<sup>346</sup>

Objectives (a) and (b) of the Yergam Union's constitution clearly had an altruistic objective of desiring to enhance the collective interest of the group, though it must be said that this was the period when the roots of ethno-identity politics were sowed, when ethnic groups began to

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<sup>345</sup> Original text of document written in Hausa, translated by author.

<sup>346</sup> CONSTITUTION OF THE YERGAM UNION, [TSARIN MULKIN KA'IDODIN JAMIYYAR YERGAMMAWA], printed by Adeyemi Works, Ibadan, 29.12.1950, p.1-2.

position themselves against one another, and competition became the dominant form of interaction and relations between ethnic groups. The location of the Plateau Province within the contours of Central Nigeria meant this competition was relatively much more acute than in other parts of the country. If objectives (a) and (b) were targeted towards ethnic unity, the target of objectives (c) and (d) albeit, indirectly, had the traditional rulers as targets. In calling on their kith and kin to embrace western education, advancement and shun ignorance the founders of the Yergam Union were informing the chiefs of the emergence on the horizon of a new dispensation that would usher in social as well as political changes. The Tarok educated elite of the Yergam Union sought to guide their people in the direction that the world was moving in. Finally, objective (d) reads more like an order than offered advice, as the Yergam Union officials were keen to advise and guide the traditional rulers on what they wanted and what they did not want. It is no surprise that conflict and contestation was soon to emerge between traditional rulers across the Province and the members of such pressure groups.

In an interview with Benjamin Voncir, he recalls how he and a group of young Tarok men who had mostly been educated to a contemporary equivalent of secondary school level in teacher training, and he admits with considerable Christian missionary influence founded the Yergam Union in 1950. The Yergam Union as I had discussed above, was formed to build a particular kind of consciousness in Yergam (Tarok) society. A consciousness that would embrace what Benjamin Voncir and others understood as advancement, and socio-political development of their people. They clamoured for ethnic unity and discouraged clan considerations; they encouraged school enrolment and made funds available for children who showed promise. They embraced Christianity and frowned at aspects of indigenous religion that they regarded as backward. In a 1949 confidential letter to the Resident, Plateau Province, the then District Officer, Lowland Division, had this assessment of the growing influence of the emerging educated elites in the Yergam (Tarok) area:

The Plain Yergam (Tarok) are the most progressive in this division, and a combination of S.U.M products and of ex-servicemen have started holding meetings at which they discuss local affairs. After their discussions, two or three of them go to the Ponzhi Langtang [then title of main Tarok chief; this changed with the unification of the graded stools in 1957] and more or less tell him he has to carry out their wishes. Hence, a good deal of Ponzhi Langtang's awkwardness,

because he is being pressed by us on one side and by them on the other.<sup>347</sup>

This sentiment was also expressed by Hunt's successor as District Officer. In 1953, Mr E Broadbent wrote in an annual report about a certain form of crystallisation of consciousness amongst the Tarok. This was captured in the report as follows:

Amongst the Yergam generally, the younger and more progressive elements have found a much needed forum in the new district council. The great majority of them are adherents of the Sudan United Mission and reveal a distinct interest in what may be described as 'middle belt' aspirations. The group of individuals also constitute the backbone of the Plain Yergam Progressive Union. So far, however, their concern has been mainly with local affairs and they appear to exert a healthy influence on the whole. In matters touching on farming and education the plain Yergam are outstanding for their industry and desire for improvement.<sup>348</sup>

At first, the Yergam Union saw the traditional rulers as partners in their quest for societal enlightenment. This however changed drastically with the advent of party politics. The period between 1958 – 1966 witnessed deterioration in the relationship between the Yergam Union and the then Ponzhi Tarok, Garba Wuyep.<sup>349</sup> Benjamin Voncir captures the highlights of this feud as follows:

When the era of politics came towards independence we believed as a people, we should decide collectively where to pitch our tent (this was rendered in Tarok). We had to choose amongst the various parties, and we decided to go with the Action Group at the national level. To contest election for the regional assembly we had a Yergam Union/UMBC alliance with Tarka and his people. This was the most popular trend amongst groups in the middle belt. We did not want to align with the Sarduana because we felt he played religious politics. At the time, there was much pressure to support the NPC, but we went with the alternatives which we considered as viable alternatives....Our relationship with the Chief deteriorated because he was not following our advice on major decisions that involved the people. I will give you two examples; the first point is he went along with the NPC against our advice and alliance with the UMBC. Secondly, without consulting the Yergam Union the Chief built a Mosque in front of the palace in the early 1960s. At a point it became untenable for him to remain as

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<sup>347</sup> NAK JosProf. 1/1/6451, Hunt to Resident Plateau Province, Lowland Division, 1949.

<sup>348</sup> NAK JosProf. 1/1/6451, Annual Report, E. Broadbent, D.O. Lowland Division, 1952, para.4.

<sup>349</sup> The Ponzhi Tarok stool was formerly instituted in 1957. Garba Wuyep was thus the first occupant of the stool; this was following the MacPherson reforms but also following years of negotiation to unify the two major Tarok administrative units, formerly referred to as Hill and Plain Yergam.

Chief and tried severally to remove him, in fact we wrote a petition, but it did not succeed.<sup>350</sup>

These emerging elites therefore latched on to discourses of self-determination, and visions of the future that would culminate in the social and economic advancement of their communities, with them at the political helm. The fractious relationship between the chiefs and the pressure groups was punctuated at times, as there was a unity of purpose in pursuance of common goals. An example was the process for the unification of the Hill and Plain Yergam (Tarok) to create the Langtang Native Authority, and the Paramount stool of the Ponzhi Tarok in 1957.<sup>351</sup> The desire and ambition of this emerging elite to have more involvement in the running of the Native Administration, however, meant that the relationship was more fractious than cordial.<sup>352</sup> The traditional rulers at best were doubtful of the real intentions of these emerging youth groups and feared if left unchecked the young aspiring upstarts may aspire to usurp their power and authority, or even challenge the legitimacy of their rule. Therefore, the local government reforms of 1975 played into the hands of the emerging elite as they stripped the traditional rulers of their authority, with the elites replacing them as local government officials. For instance in Langtang Local Government Area, the first Chairman elected in 1976 was Ezekiel Yusuf, a former leading member of the Yergam Union. Several other active former members of the Yergam Union emerged as councillors and supervisors.<sup>353</sup>

Another important point that explains the not so cordial relationship between these pressure groups and the traditional rulers was the fact that these groups had established strong alliances with the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC). The UMBC emerged out of the resistance of the non-Muslim groups of the central Nigerian Provinces to emirate rule and Islamic influence. Amongst other things, the UMBC positioned itself as an opposition party to the dominant northern ruling party, the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC), which dominated politics in the north for over two decades.<sup>354</sup> A critical point was that the traditional rulers

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<sup>350</sup> Benjamin Voncir, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Langtang, Plateau State, 10.01.2015.

<sup>351</sup> Stephen Banfa *Political Transformation and Ethnic Unification of a Plateau Community: The Tarok (Yergam) from the 19<sup>th</sup> Century to c.1954*, (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Birmingham, 1985), 226-267.

<sup>352</sup> Wapkur Benjamin Voncir, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 10.01.2015, also see analysis in Chapter 5, and for more details across Plateau province also see Mangwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 95-126.

<sup>353</sup> Selcan Miner, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos – Nigeria 07.01.2014.

<sup>354</sup> For more on this see Paul C. Logams, *The Middle Belt Movement in Nigerian Political Development: A Study in Political Identity 1949-1967*, (Centre for Middle Belt Studies, Abuja, Nigeria, 2004) and Mathew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics, and Power in Northern Nigeria*, (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1993).



were closely aligned to the NPC, particularly as they aspired to remain relevant members of the Northern Assembly of Emirs and Chiefs.

To situate it within a historical geopolitical context, the Middle Belt refers both to the geographical area that stretches across the central axis of Nigeria and to the political project that began in the mid-1940s among non-Muslim minority ethnic groups in the former Northern Region of Nigeria. The mainly missionary-educated elites in non-Muslim areas of the North agitated for self-determination from what they termed as 'Hausa-Fulani' domination through the creation of a Middle Belt Region, to be carved out of Northern Nigeria. Amongst the Tarok and Goemai of Langtang and Shendam NAs at this time (late 1950s to early 1960s), the contestation was not about accepting the authority of the chief or the enforcement of law and order by the NA police. This threshold had already passed. The challenge as I have previously discussed was a rejection of the decision by the Ponzhi Tarok, Garba Wuyep, and the Long Goemai of Shendam, Adamu Nyelong, to join the NPC against the wishes of the missionary trained emerging elites, who rather saw their political future with the United Middle Belt Congress/Action Group Alliance (UMBC-AG). Interestingly enough most of the emerging elites who had turned down the 'carrot' offer of the NPC reconsidered their position and had a change of mind in the run up to the elections of 1963/64, as early as 1962. Benjamin Vongcir recounts how the Yergam Union members on the side of the Tarok, changed their allegiance from the UMBC/AG alliance to the NPC:

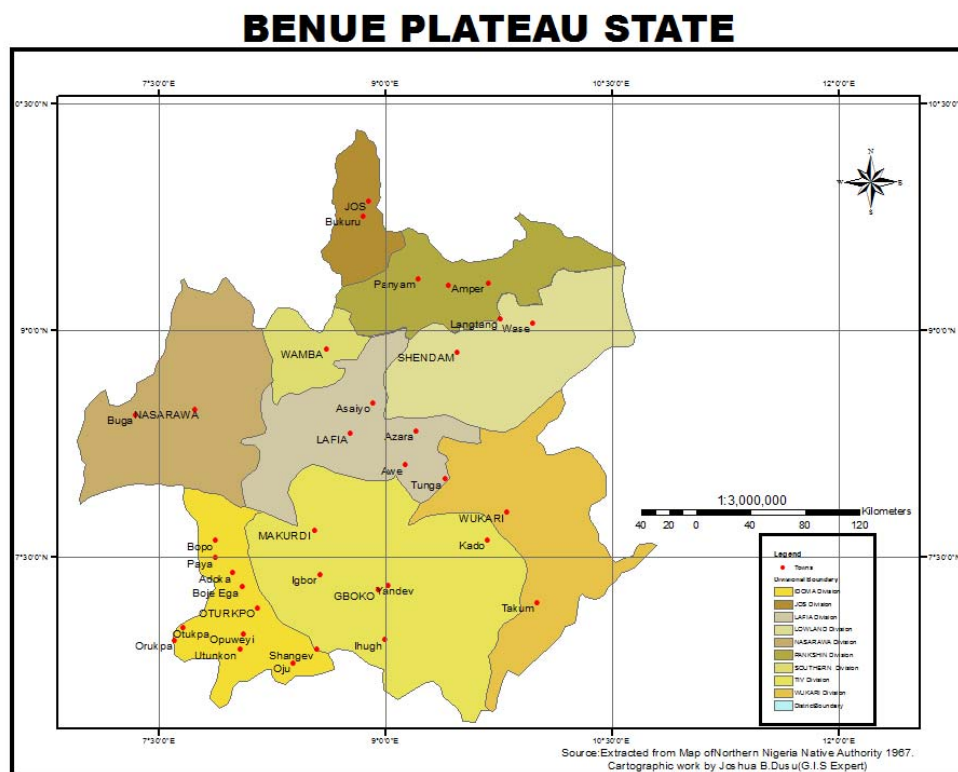
We were convinced that by joining the UMBC/AG alliance we had joined the right coalition. The challenge was we were finding it difficult to deliver to our community. Proposals for infrastructural development were either turned down or delayed. It was at this time that the then D.O in Shendam advised us, and emphasised the fact that while he understands our politics he thinks it is flawed in strategy, because we pay our tax to Kaduna, so why are we supporting a party based in Ibadan. This is why we had to reconsider; we then withdraw our support from the UMBC/AG alliance and joined the NPC. We advised our member in the national parliament late Solomon Lar to cross carpet to the NPC. Suddenly, things began to change, in fact, the Sardauna himself donated 75 pound shillings to support the building of our NA office, and it was also at this time that we built a new office for the NAPF.<sup>355</sup>

With this move, the emerging elites had by and large acted out an act of acquiescence to the wishes of the ruling NPC, and in a sense abandoned their agitations and protest against the

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<sup>355</sup> Benjamin Vongcir interviewed by Jimam Lar, 10.01.2015.

Hausa dominance of the region. It should be noted that though a Middle Belt region was never created, the sentiments of the movement, issues concerning minorities particularly discourses of self-determination from perceived and actual domination of a Hausa Fulani ruling elite, are still present. These are continually expressed in the context of violent sectarian conflicts like those that have affected Plateau State and southern Kaduna State.



**Figure 5:** Map of Benue-Plateau State, extracted from the former Northern Region in 1967.<sup>356</sup>

In sum, the local government reforms implemented by the Gowon regime in 1975 had varied impacts across the former Northern Region. In areas where there had been a long history of centralised chiefly political institutions like northern Nigeria's emirates, the re-organisation of the role of traditional rulers in the day-to-day running of government, while stripping them of all their statutory powers, did not necessarily impact on their authority and social legitimacy. Traditional rulers in such areas continued to have status and the loyalty and support of their communities. A contrast was to be found among the minority ethnic groups of central Nigeria; particularly groups that prior to the colonial conquest had a socio-political system that was regarded as acephalous – or non-centralised. The local government reforms reduced such

<sup>356</sup> Benue Plateau State was created by the administration of General Yakubu Gowon (himself a Middle Belter), this was seen as an atonement for what the Central Nigerian groups considered as the fiasco of the Willink's Minorities Commission.

chiefs to mere ceremonial heads of their communities, as the role of chiefs as a sort of executive head of the community or ethnic group had not had sufficient time to develop and be recognised by the people. Compared to in the emirates, it was hard for chiefs in central Nigeria to legitimately stand on their own right without formal power, the paraphernalia of office and tools of exercising authority. Vaughan remarks that like many reforms preceding it, the Guidelines for Local Government Reforms of 1976 underscored the dilemma of chieftaincy in contemporary politics. According to Vaughan,

Traditional rulers are expected to endorse state policies, while at the same time shunning party political activities. Clearly, the line separating local governance and partisanship is in reality a very thin one. As critical components of entrenched regional and local interest, traditional rulers are destined to walk a tight rope between the demands posed by the holders of state power and those of local constituencies.”<sup>357</sup>

The new system essentially created a third tier of governance. The traditional rulers still existed and were not going to go away, but they were left in an ambiguous situation. On the one hand, they had been stripped of their statutory authority and they no longer ran local administration. In the late 1970s amidst these reforms, an academic consensus emerged to the effect that the creation of a new, third tier of government at the local level. The Land Use Decree of 1978, and the abolition of local police forces and prisons were major blows that traditional rulers would be unable to recover from or regain any sort of relevance or social legitimacy.<sup>358</sup> These arguments did not factor in the critical role that traditional institutions were beginning to play within ethnic communities, particularly in the Middle Belt. Within the context of emerging ethno-nationalism, traditional rulers had emerged as an important rallying point of ethnic identity. Even though emerging elites wanted to wrestle local administration from them, it was in nobody’s interest to revert to the pre-colonial era when these societies were organised and administered according to clan delineations.

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<sup>357</sup> Olufemi Vaughan, *Nigerian Chiefs: Traditional Power in Modern Politics, 1890s-1990s*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2000), 141.

<sup>358</sup> Marenin, “Policing Nigeria: Control and Autonomy”, 76-78.

#### 4.6. Structural Adjustment and the Quest for Order: State-Induced Vigilantism

Another important epoch in the evolution of vigilante policing in Nigeria and particularly Plateau State is linked to the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) from 1986 and the impact it had on state policing.<sup>359</sup> The provision of public security and the maintenance of law and order—a statutory responsibility of the police, which at the time it must be noted was already not in good shape—went from bad to worse. The government, in response to growing crime and lawlessness, turned to the citizens for a solution. Fourchard has argued that the motivation of the Nigerian government at the time was principally to restore the authority of the police following the activities of a notorious armed robber, Anini, who had terrorised Nigerians in southern parts of the country and eluded police arrest for several years.<sup>360</sup> Following the introduction of structural adjustment, the prospects for institutionalising vigilante policing gained additional traction. In the decade from 1970-1978, the Nigerian military government enjoyed a period of high export earnings from petroleum revenue, the so-called oil boom that ushered in a rise in public spending. Public spending escalated, rising from 1.1 billion Naira in 1970 to 6.5 billion Naira in 1975.<sup>361</sup> The Nigerian military government embarked on a massive spending spree, hosting and organising international cultural festivals, for instance the Festival of Black Arts and Culture (FESTAC) and local sports competitions, giving huge bonuses to workers, and an array of public works – education, health care, public infrastructure – all without proper investment in the productive capacity of the economy. Unfortunately, the ‘oil boom’ was soon to become ‘oil doom.’ Following the international fall in oil prices the revenues of the Nigerian government dwindled. The reason for this was obvious: Nigeria was running a mono-economy. Agriculture, which was formerly the mainstay of the economy, had gone into decline. Olukoshi notes that manufacturing and unemployment had also gone into massive decline and from 1980 to 1983; over 1 million workers were retrenched.<sup>362</sup> Despite huge public protests, the Babangida led military government implemented the prescriptions of the World Bank and

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<sup>359</sup> For analysis on the impact of structural adjustment on policing in other Nigerian communities see; Pratten, “The Thief eats his Shame”, 64-83; and Fourchard, “A New Name for an Old Practice”, 16-40.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>361</sup> Jibrin Ibrahim, “The Transformation of Ethno-Regional Identities in Nigeria”, in *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria*, Attahiru Jega ed., (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2000), 41-61.

<sup>362</sup> Adebayo Olukoshi, ed. *Crisis and Adjustment in the Nigerian Economy*. (Lagos: JAD, 1991), 28-33.

the International Monetary Fund to implement large-scale austerity. The austerity cuts were across all sectors of Nigerian society. This was a period of massive state withdrawal from public services.

By Ambrose Oghuvbu

## SIGNS OF THE TIME

## Drinking: The SAP way

ONE thing stands out from the prevailing economic situation in the country. The present condition has made many people to re-direct their priorities. The major thing now is how to adjust yourself to the prevailing market forces in order for you to make ends meet. In doing this, eating habits, dressing and other social habits have changed drastically, because they have been substituted with new patterns of habits which are radically different from what they used to be.

Before now, a lot of people were not used to patronising bars where locally brewed wine, like palm wine, burukutu and pito are sold. It was left for the rural folks and hard core traditionalists to patronise. So much so that it was identified with poverty and primitivity.

But these days all these stereo-type has given way to new image of acceptability as a result of increased patronage by military detachments.

Now palm wine, burukutu and pito sellers are experiencing a boom as a lot of people now patronise them. This cannot be divorced from the skyrocketing prices of different brands of beer, whose prices range from N2.50 to N5.50, depending on the brand.

Instead of going for beer, people now prefer palm wine, burukutu and pito because, it is relatively cheaper. Although some people patronise them in the morning and afternoon periods, the peak period is normally between 6-11 p.m. when most people must have closed from the days work and business.

At this time if you visit any bar where burukutu or pito is sold you will see a lot of people going in and out. The price of these locally brewed wine are very cheap. They range from between 20 to 50¢ depending on the size of the calabash used. One particular thing about the bars selling locally brewed wine is that, they are usually located at obscure and remote areas. This gives the psychological cover to the patrons. And another factor in the bars where locally brewed wine are sold is that you have a lot of

information that are not published by the newspapers or carried by the radio or television houses. Some discuss the economy like real experts. Most of their discussions centre on the military, who and whom is involved in a real or imagined coup attempt, the power wranglings within the

AFRC, the likely pattern of political formation in the Third Republic.

In fact, you will be amazed on what, and the authority with which they discuss these issues. The bars where locally brewed alcohol are sold also act as a forum for releasing tensions associated with the strains of SAP and FEM.

On the increased patronage of locally brewed drinks, I asked some people who were ready to speak to me. A young man who prefers anonymity said people now patronise locally brewed wine like burukutu and pito because it is the least expensive form of alcohol.

According to him, with about two - three naira one can feel happy with himself, an amount which to him is just only sufficient to buy a bottle of beer. He further

told. Another patroniser, who also prefers anonymity is of the view that the basic reason for the increased patronage of locally brewed alcohol is economic. According to him with the worsening of the economic fortunes of Nigerians, many people cannot afford a bottle of beer talk more of buying two bottles. In lieu of this, the locally brewed stuffs like pito and burukutu tend to act as substitutes for the prohibitive prices of beer. And with the cheap prices of pito, burukutu, patronise an individual can therefore get himself intoxicated by merely using half the amount of the price of beer to get as many calabashes of locally brewed alcohol. Added to this is the fact that people prefer palm wine, burukutu and pito because apart from being cheaper, they contain some vitamins which are vital for the proper functioning of the body, for instance yeast is good for the eyes.

However the sellers of pito, burukutu and palm wine need to up date their sanitary condition. This factor has discouraged some people who want to patronise them.

## Combing the dustbin for survival

From search dustbins with signs. These people make at least N20.00 a day. And when they are fortunate to come across metal scraps they make at least N50.00. Apart from this category

of dustbin combers, there are those that search for yam peelings. They also go from one dustbin to another. These people either sell the peelings or make use of it themselves.

When enough has been collected the yam peelings are washed and sun-dried. Some sell it as it is, while some go further to grind it in the machine and the final outcome is a

powdery substance known as yam flour or akubo and it is used to make amala which is a popular delicacy among the Yorubas. And since the price of garri keeps galloping upwards

many have shifted their attention to yam flour. This has become an effective cost saving strategy since the onset of SAP and FEM.

Moreover there is another category of dustbin combers. This group searches for left over foods if there is any. They normally restrict their search to the GRA, and other areas occupied by the well-to-do in the society. Apart from this they also pay visits to the dustbins of restaurant and hotels.

They restrict their search to these areas because it is only from there they can find what they want. This is because nowadays many do not have enough to eat in their houses talk more of having left overs. So this group of dustbin combers, after collecting the left-over foods from the dustbins, take it home and re-cook it. They usually start business from 9 a.m. to 12 noon when a lot of people should have left for their various places of work. So with this the eyes on them are not many. And, moreover those that search for left-overs have over the years established a cordial relationship with the gate men/

security guards usually found in the GRA and houses occupied by wealthy people. They therefore have free access to premises.

The degradation of people to the extent of combing dustbins should give a lot of concern to the government and right thinking people in the society. This is because there was a time in this country when money was not the problem, but how to spend it. But now we know how to spend money, but the money is not available.

And it should be a reminder to Aghaji Usman Dikko a Minister in the Second Republic, who in defence of Shagari's austerity measures said people have not started eating from the dustbins. I do not know what he has to say when people are not only openly eating from the dustbins, but surviving through the dustbin.

One thing is however, pertinent in salvaging the economy it should not be at the expense of the survival of the people. This is because when an economic policy that is meant to make life worthwhile and meaningful to the people turns around to make them destitute, it will be insane to continue with such an economic policy.



Figure 6: The Newspaper cartoons capture the "signs of the time" as austerity occasion by SAP takes its toll; Nigerians had to find ways of cutting cost.

Consequently, the embracing of a market –determined access to security and justice, was the effect of reduced investment, including state security institutions.<sup>363</sup> The market approach to security and justice further alienated citizens, particularly the poor.<sup>364</sup> In an interview with *Maiangwa Chenvong Vongbut*,<sup>365</sup> the current vigilante group leader of Langtang North LGA, he recalled the process of establishing the vigilante groups in the mid-1980s as follows:

The then Ponzhi Tarok (Paramount Traditional Ruler of the Tarok – Chief) was called upon to Abuja (this is circa 1986)...they were told that there is a shortfall in manpower. We used to have '*yan sandan NA*' but now they have been discarded.... and we only have the police who are grossly insufficient.... There is a need to select some people who would fill in the gap.... When they arrest any criminal, they should take such suspect to the nearest police station... for further investigation, so that we can restore order in the land.... When the Ponzhi Tarok returned, people were selected, and I was among those selected.... We were given appointment letters; the DPM of the local government signs the appointment letter.... We continued working [and] at the end of the month they give us allowances.

The *Yansandan NA* referred to in the quote was the colloquial term used for the Native Authority Police. Police numbers were insufficient at this time due to the lack of resources from the government to employ new policemen, but also for the training and retraining of those already in service. DPM is an abbreviation for Director of Personnel Management, usually the head of administration, normally the most senior career civil servant at the local government level. The allowances mentioned were monthly stipends paid to the vigilante groups. The NPF at the time midwived the introduction of Police Community Relations Committees (PCRC) in all State, Area and Divisional Commands across the country. It has been argued that the PCRC represented a shift in policing and crime prevention that was initiated following the increase in the rate of crime.<sup>366</sup> Furthermore, its central idea was to redeem the image and improve public relations of the police by establishing a link between the police and the community.

For those involved on the ground, the account is often narrated on the lines of a chief responding to his subjects' discomfort as they confront rising levels of crime. What they did not know at the time was that the Chief was acting on a government directive, and vigilantism

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<sup>363</sup> Funmi Olonisakin, Eka Ikpe, and Paschal Badong, *The Future of Security and Justice for the Poor: A 'Blue Sky' Think-Piece*, (CSDG Policy Studies, no21, 2009), 16.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>365</sup> Interview with Maiangwa Chenvong Vongbut, Chairman Vigilante Group of Nigeria, Langtang North, at his residence Langtang, 14.08.2012

<sup>366</sup> CLEEN and NHRC, 40.

had been formulated as community policing.<sup>367</sup> At the core of the implementation of the PCRC was the traditional ruler. Traditional rulers were equally critical drivers of the origin and transformation of vigilante practice. In other words, the PCRC and vigilantism found a meeting point in traditional rulers. It was the negotiating skills of the traditional rulers that enabled two contrasting initiatives to seamlessly coexist and entrench the practice of plural policing in Plateau State. Furthermore, there were traditional rulers who did not simply engage in mobilisation of young men in their community, but were personally involved in vigilante practice. An example of such is the former Ngolong Ngas, the late Adamu Gutus. In an interview, a former member of the VGN in Pankshin town, Sunday Philibus, recalls this as follows: “I joined the vigilante group in 1989. At that time His Royal Highness, the late Ngolong Ngas Mallam Adamu Gutus, was our chairman. Our secretary was the then principal of Government College Pankshin, Mr George Yakzum. We meet every evening at the chief’s palace before we go out on patrol for briefing, and we report again in the morning.”<sup>368</sup>

This was a case of vigilante policing established by the state to respond to a shortfall in policing numbers, as a result of the state cutting down on critical social services. This was not unique to Plateau; community-policing initiatives sprung up in different parts of the country in the wake of the Structural Adjustment Programme. Fourchard has examined and analysed this amongst the Yoruba of South West Nigeria.<sup>369</sup> He argues that among the Yoruba, specifically in Ibadan, the main source of his empirical data, ‘Vigilante’ is a term initially proposed by the police in the mid-1980s as a substitute for an older practice present since the colonial period and referred to as the ‘hunter guard’ or ‘night guard’ system.<sup>370</sup>

In public advertorials, citizens were encouraged to ‘help the police serve them better’.<sup>371</sup> The mantra from the state police, borrowing from the international trend at the time, was all about community policing as a panacea for high crime rates. Benjamin Vancir recounts that the then military administrator of Plateau, Col. Lawrence Onoja, on a tour of the local government areas, encouraged the traditional rulers and the people to mobilize and embrace the

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<sup>367</sup> This argument is developed in Fourchard, “A New Name for an Old Practice”, *AFRICA*, 16-40.

<sup>368</sup> Sunday Philibus, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Pankshin,

<sup>369</sup> Fourchard, “A New Name for an Old Practice” *Africa*.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

<sup>371</sup> Interview with Mahmud Mwanjil Binfa, Dadur, Langtang North, Plateau state 10.08.2012, also see Fourchard, “A New Name for an Old Practice” 29.



government's community policing initiatives.<sup>372</sup> This was the beginning of police/vigilante co-operation in Plateau State. The vigilante groups at that time began to believe they were operating as an extension of the state. The roles and functions of vigilante groups expanded: they provided information – intelligence – and arrested suspects and handed them over to the police.<sup>373</sup> They also worked in conjunction with market authorities across Plateau State to maintain law and order in local markets.

Meanwhile as the decade of the 1980s progressed into the early 1990s the traditional rulers on the Plateau, as was the case in other parts of the country, had conveniently re-established their authority. The chiefs in Plateau State began to seek out creative means to maintain a hold on their communities. They introduced the practice of bestowing traditional titles on prominent elites from the community or outside; the acquisition of a chieftaincy title confers some degree of legitimacy and status on the recipient.<sup>374</sup> In contemporary Nigeria the obsession for titles and acquiring honours are manifestations of the ruling classes' craving to juggle between and at times satisfy the competing demands of what Ekeh referred to as the 'two publics.'<sup>375</sup> Traditional rulers also codified legal codes to respond to the need of maintaining control of land, and land use, amid the federal military government's reform of land use in Nigeria introduced in 1978;<sup>376</sup> and they championed the introduction or continuation of traditional festivals and celebrations. The introduction of Customary Courts of Appeal provided a formal appellate court within the state judicial process that recognised these codified laws, and the custodian of the law was the traditional ruler. It is within such a context that traditional rulers' facilitated the establishment of vigilante groups; they argued that this was to help maintain law and order within their domains.<sup>377</sup> The vigilantes were commonly referred to as neighbourhood watch groups or vanguard groups, and colloquially they were referred to by the Hausa term '*Yanbanga*' (derived from the English word 'vanguard'). This is a term which the contemporary Vigilante Group of Nigeria has tried without success to discard, preferring the term 'Vigilante Group of Nigeria', which is of course officious and demonstrates the group's status as part of the institutional structure of policing.

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<sup>372</sup> Benjamin Wapkur Vancir, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 10.01.2015.

<sup>373</sup> The typology of these suspects ranged from armed robbers to petty thieves and even delinquent youths.

<sup>374</sup> P.O. Agbese, "Chiefs, Constitutions, and Policies in Nigeria", *West Africa Review*: Issue 6, (2004), 4.

<sup>375</sup> Ekeh, "Colonialism and the two publics in Africa".

<sup>376</sup> The Land Use Act was made law in 1978, however though the state governors were given control over all land; it was urban land that the impact of the law was immediately felt. In rural areas where there was no immediate need of usage from the government, traditional rulers were in constant negotiation with traditional landholders.

<sup>377</sup> Interview with a former special adviser to the military governor in the 1970s.

As previously, argued, traditional rulers under the Native Authority system were on occasion using the '*Yan Doka* as their personal force, reducing them to *Dogarai*.<sup>378</sup> What the state reforms of the late 1960s and the mid-1970s took away with the disbandment of the NAPF and the reform of local government was replaced with vigilante groups – '*Yanbanga*. In our area of research, the first generation of this practice was drawn from civil war veterans. In Langtang North, Langtang South, and Shendam local government areas (LGAs) of Plateau State, the idea to establish a community-based neighbourhood watch group emerged from the palaces of traditional rulers. In a council meeting in 1971, the then Ponzhi Tarok (the Tarok paramount chief) called the attention of his council to the rise of crime, robbery and general lawlessness in his domain. This was two years after the NAPF was disbanded and the number of police officers in the (NPF) detachment in Langtang was higher in number compared with the NAPF. He lamented that the unfortunate developments had a correlation with the dismantling of the NAPF without adequately replacing it with an alternative institution.<sup>379</sup> Specifically, what had changed was that they were no longer under his authority and control. Traditional rulers were concerned about their loss of an enforcement arm. The traditional rulers were stripped of all their administrative powers, alongside other processes that were unfolding that seemed contrary to their interests, as previously noted, traditional rulers were convinced that if they were to muster any sort of relevance and influence they had to be creative. The origins of the '*Yanbanga* in the mid-1970s and its establishment in the 1980s is therefore understood as part of several initiatives by traditional rulers to regain some semblance of authority.

Having made the decision to establish neighbourhood watch groups, the traditional rulers found a very reliable and ready-made group to champion the idea and become the major driving force for the return of a plural policing landscape. Civil war veterans, who were demobilized after the Nigerian civil war and were mostly frustrated at the ordeal of having their army careers cut short, and without having been considered for absorption by the NPF, were keen to lead the way in recruiting and training selected young men to serve their communities as *Yanbanga*.<sup>380</sup> I encountered several men now in their 70s who had served as

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<sup>378</sup>NAK. JosProf, 1/1/6451, Annual Report Lowland Division, 1953, 4 and 1955, 4.

<sup>379</sup> Interview with Alhaji Ali Vongbut Dakshang, Elder Wacha Dadur, 12.08.2012.

<sup>380</sup> In our context *Yanbanga* refers to community and neighbourhood policing structures, the word *Yanbanga* is a pollution of the English word 'vanguard' as in keeping watch – so instead of Yan-vanguard it quickly became used in colloquial Hausa as *Yanbanga*. This should not be confused with the *Yanbanga* of the late 1970s early 1980s in the northern Nigerian city of Kano. In Kano *Yanbanga* were political party thugs recruited by parties to unsettle political rivals.

*Yanbanga* in the 1970s and I met a few of the civil war veterans in Langtang North Local Government Area who were a critical part of the establishment of *Yanbanga*.<sup>381</sup> Profiles of some of these individuals are discussed in chapter seven.

In sum, what emerges from this chapter, and as Vaughan aptly observed, is the manner in which chieftaincy structures are continuously regenerated and adapted to a constantly shifting socio-political and economic reality.<sup>382</sup> Generating his empirical case from amongst the Yoruba of south-west Nigeria, Vaughan shows the dynamism and resilience of chieftaincy structures in modern Nigerian politics. In Plateau State, the traditional rulers and the institution in general were equally resilient and creative. In a very competitive landscape of ethnic contestation and identity politics, traditional rulers emerged as rallying points for ethno-nationalistic projects. As we have noted elsewhere,

While traditional and customary rulers have no constitutional role in Nigerian governance, their importance and influence are clear to see. Traditional rulers, by virtue of occupying an important bridge between state and society, emerge as critical and symbolic figures for the groups and territories they represent.”<sup>383</sup>

Accordingly, the apparent limitation of Nigerian state structures, and a lack of penetrative state influence in regards to providing amenities at the grassroots, has consequently further enhanced the status of chiefs as important agents of mediation and negotiation. Traditional rulers continue to serve as a conduit by which the federal, state, and local governments access the people. In this sense, traditional rulers while not carrying constitutional power are by default still an extension of the state at the local level, and they have the social legitimacy to exercise authority. The 1979, 1989, 1995 constitutional attempts to diminish the role and significance of traditional rulers by denying them explicit executive and judicial powers have been largely unsuccessful.<sup>384</sup> While the apparatus of the state denies them these roles, the agents of this same state (the bureaucrats) in their practices, recognise and respect traditional rulers. During elections Traditional rulers are not only canvassed for political support, more importantly they are co-opted by politicians. Again, of importance here is the social legitimacy traditional ruler enjoy. Therefore, the institutionalisation of plural policing is

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<sup>381</sup> Group interview with four former Yanbanga, Dadur Langtang North, 13.08.2012 and Interview with a former Vigilante, Shendam, Plateau state, 11.11.2012

<sup>382</sup> Ibid., 1-2.

<sup>383</sup> Higazi and Lar, “Articulations of Belonging” *Africa*, 127.

<sup>384</sup> Agbese, Chiefs, Constitutions, and Policies in Nigeria, 2.

embedded within the processes that have institutionalised traditional and customary leadership. While vigilante group members have metamorphosed to a point where their continued existence no longer relies on the traditional and customary leaders, the logics and dynamics of vigilante practice continue to revolve around the chiefs.

#### **4.7. Conclusion**

This chapter has argued that current forms of institutionalised plural policing in Plateau State, Nigeria can be traced back along a direct historical trajectory. This trajectory originates in the institutionalisation of paramouncy in the chieftaincy institutions of the Plateau Province of Nigeria from the early 1940s to the late 1950s; to the dismantling of the former Native Authority Police in the late 1960s; to the Nigerian government's policy in the mid-1970s to reform local government, and to the attempt by traditional rulers to re-assert some semblance of influence and authority. The major link in this process of institutionalising plural policing is the institution of traditional rulership. The processes of negotiating change revolved around the traditional rulers. Furthermore, I demonstrated how the Nigerian state was involved in the formation of vigilante groups in the 1980s; the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) influenced this. The chapter argues that the contemporary plural policing landscape is a product of a socio-political historical process. The chapter has also explored important epochs within the historical trajectory on a macro level, and showed how these epochs influenced and affected the social landscape at the micro level, establishing links we otherwise may not have noticed. Hills, while analysing a different feature of reforming the Nigerian Police, reminds us that not only do we need to situate explanations within their proper historical and social contexts, but also we need to be nuanced in our assessments of drivers and effects of reform and change.<sup>385</sup> In this chapter, I have tried to show that even though having evolved on different trajectories the macro processes analysed speak to the need to reform Nigeria's current policing structures. The next chapter seeks to discuss the historical and contemporary processes of socialising /re-socialising of state and non-state policing actors.

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<sup>385</sup> Alice Hills, *The Dialectic of Police Reform in Nigeria*, *The Journal of Modern Africa Studies*, vol. 46, no. 2, (2008), 230.

## Chapter Five: The Socialisation of Policing Actors

### 5.1. Introduction

Recounting his time in Nigeria, Mr. Robin Mitchell,<sup>386</sup> a former colonial police officer who served in Bauchi, Plateau (Jos), Sokoto, and Minna Provinces of Northern Nigeria, made the point that the effectiveness and efficiency of the NA Police varied across the region. It depended, according to Mr Mitchell, on the Chief or Emir overseeing the police and the general situation in each Native Authority. Some Provinces were easy to police and nothing much was heard from them, but there was constant turmoil in others, largely because of the activities of the NA police and the highhandedness of some Chiefs and Emirs. Mr Mitchell's main point here is that the background and socialisation of NA Police - and one could say by extension vigilante groups that came after - was drawn from different sources, and these sources were by no means creating a harmonised policing outcome. My main objective in this chapter is to show how in spite of all the differences across the landscape of plural policing there was a convergence of influences. I show how it is possible to discern certain common features of a common socialisation of policing actors. It is therefore not just the institutions that shape practice; we have to also look at how agency is formed, by groups and actors. The insight that emerges shows us how exactly vigilante groups and the NAPF that preceded them learned the practice of policing.

The previous chapter focused on how events and processes on a macro level impacted on state building processes at micro local levels. In this chapter, the focus is on the processes of transformation and institutionalisation of plural policing as experienced and described by the members of the NAPF and vigilante group members. What are the narratives from within these non-state policing institutions? I discuss the *modus operandi* of vigilante policing practice in historical and contemporary contexts, exploring the varied sources these groups draw upon to inform their practice. In the repertoires of vigilante practice, we find aspects of the strict ritualised practice of ancestral cults and forms of traditional policing, but we also observe practice that is informed by the army and police, culminating in diverse forms of vigilante policing. Of particular importance are the historical shifts in the processes of socialisation and how vigilantism and plural policing in general has been constructed and how this construction has changed over time.

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<sup>386</sup> Robin Mitchell, Interview Jimam Lar, Kent, United Kingdom, 23 August 2013.

## 5.2. Local Indigenous Influences

In this section I want to show how community-held ideas, norms, principles, and beliefs that in some instances predate British colonial administration have influenced the practice of Native Authority Policing and subsequently other forms of non-state policing. Socialisation is used here to explain the process of making individuals members of a society. The process of making young men social. A major manifestation of this socialisation is the extent to which ancestral cult worship constituted a major influence in the practice of local policing. This was the case in communities of the Plateau Province where there had been established practice of ancestral cults providing a specific variant of pre-colonial policing services. In spite of the major headway of Christianity, in the Plateau lowlands ancestral cults have retained considerable prominence and importance, in some communities up to the present. The scenario observed is best described as a landscape of religious coexistence, not to refer to adherents of different religions living together but rather, a considerable number of people who are simultaneously active/passive adherents of different religions. For instance, there are Christians who are active adherents and participants of masquerading and ancestral cult worship. The ancestral cult worship has different functions and cultural roles, ranging from the religious to the political and aesthetic.<sup>387</sup> However, for our purposes we are concerned with the element that focuses on the enforcement of order within the community, and masquerades that emerge or come out to discipline errant members of the community, women<sup>388</sup>, children, and uninitiated.<sup>389</sup> As I will later discuss in chapter seven, ancestral cults also play a critical role in times of collective violence, as an elderly Tarok informant recounts,

The *Orim* are our ancestors; they keep us and they protect us, they are our spiritual guide. They help to maintain order and they have the authority to enforce our traditions and our inherited norms and values. The ancestors are also critical in times of war; when we need to defend ourselves they lead the way and guarantee victory.<sup>390</sup>

To be considered qualified to serve in the Native Authority police from the late 1950s, when indigenous peoples were encouraged to join, until when it was dismantled in 1969, it was advantageous if an individual had been initiated into the ancestral cult. According to Danladi

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<sup>387</sup> Elizabeth Isichei, *Studies in the History of Plateau State, Nigeria*, (London: Macmillan Press, 1982), 25.

<sup>388</sup> Alhaji Ali Dakshang, Interview by Jimam Lar, Dadur - Langtang North, 7.10.2012.

<sup>389</sup> Roger Blench, *The Coded Language of the Orim, the Ancestral Spirits of the Tarok of Central Nigeria*, Paper for the Conference on "Spirit, Languages, Silence and Secrecy" African Secret Languages, (Koln, December 2-3<sup>rd</sup>, 2005), 2.

<sup>390</sup> Alhaji Ali Dakshang, Interview by Jimam Lar, Dadur - Langtang North, 07.10.2012.

Tanglar, at the time recruitment officers were keen to ask the question, initially the potential recruits feared it might disqualify them; some locals at the time equated the colonial regime and the church as the same, and believed the church would not support ancestral cult initiates serving in the police.<sup>391</sup> For instance, Isichei citing Bawa notes that amongst the Goemai the purpose for relating masquerades and ancestral cults to non-state policing institutions is critically informed by the fact that they had the capacity to instil fear and dread amongst the people, particularly women and the uninitiated, and because of their anonymity and supernatural dread they were (still are in some areas) peculiarly well suited to enforce the unpopular decisions of the native authorities.<sup>392</sup>

It must be taken into cognizance that most traditional institution groups like the ancestral cults or secret societies within the Province were never formally accepted as part of the Native Authority system. They were intermittently called upon on an informal basis by the chiefs to keep the young men in check, so also within this context and period it was a situation where the initiated were policing not only the initiated but equally policing themselves. The local officials had been fascinated by the ancestral cults and to an extent associated the ancestral cult with discipline, uprightness, and embedded legitimacy. Mahmud Mwangil<sup>393</sup> offers the explanation that there were occasions where local colonial officials would condemn certain cultural practices in their annual reports as backward and barbaric, yet be pragmatic enough to initiate ways of using it. The existing systems of policing and maintaining law and order at the time were particularly useful because they were accepted by the people, and thus not difficult to enforce. More so, the colonial government despite its reservations recognised the close relationship between religion and law in most non-Muslim societies on the Plateau.<sup>394</sup>

The point to be inferred here is that policing was occurring at a time that these societies were undergoing a phase of transition. On a social front, the religious landscape was being altered by the transformations ushered in by Christianity. On the political front ethno-consciousness driven by the involvement of the Plateau minorities in the nationalist movement was equally ushering in significant changes, as I have discussed in the previous chapters characterised by the contestation for power and local authority between the local chiefs and the emerging educated elites.

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<sup>391</sup> Danladi Tanglar, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos, 12.01.2015.

<sup>392</sup> Isichei, 19.

<sup>393</sup> Mahmud Mwangil interviewed by Jimam Lar, Dadur, Langtang North, 07.10.2012.

<sup>394</sup> John Smith, interview by Jimam Lar, Cheltenham, UK, 17.08.2013.

To be sure, the colonial authorities were never keen on the idea of integrating ancestral cults and secret societies into local administration. The political and social roles, as well as the judicial or adjudicative roles of these groups were regarded as somewhat ambivalent.<sup>395</sup> The main objective of the colonial officers was to midwife the evolution of strong chiefs and a centralisation of power thereof. The intertwined entanglement of ancestral cult practice and local policing was therefore a phenomenon that emerged from within the negotiated space of local communities and their immediate local officials. Interesting enough it was not in all local areas that the NAPF was present and active, therefore while the colonial system depended on the chiefs to enforce order where there were no NAPF the traditional policing institutions in some cases ancestral cults continued unabated. The ancestral cults were not just influencing the policing practice of the NAPF; they were more importantly also providing policing services.

Another influence on non-state policing structures, particularly contemporary forms of vigilantism that was drawn from the ancestral cult worship, is the practice of coded language. This is a non-structured form of elucidating group belongingness. In linguistic terms, it is referred to as an anti-language. “An anti-language is nobody’s mother tongue; it exists solely in the context of re-socialisation, and the reality it creates is inherently an alternative reality, one that is constructed in order to function in alteration.”<sup>396</sup> The adoption of such coded language allows non-state policing actors to create a community of practice, the anti-language by its nature has an anti-linguistic intention, and the language is used, or adopted so that non-members do not understand what is said. This is still the practice amongst vigilante groups in Plateau State. I personally witnessed it while on patrol with vigilante group members in Langtang North and Shendam local governments. In Langtang North, it was a fusion of expired<sup>397</sup> words from ancestral cult worship and the local Tarok language. In Shendam, on the other hand it was a coded language with influence from Hausa. Few words required for daily patrol operations were coded. I was informed that with mobile phones the VGN in Shendam were rarely relying on the coded language as they could communicate via text messaging and calls. Albeit, they complained that they often do not have money for phone credit.

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<sup>395</sup> John Smith, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Cheltenham, United Kingdom, 17.08.2013.

<sup>396</sup> Halliday, M.A.K., *Language as Social Semiotic*, (London: Edward Arnold, 1978), quoted from Rajend Mesthrie, and Ellen Hurst, “Slang Registers, code-switching and restricted urban varieties in South Africa: An analytical overview of tsotsitaals with special reference to the Cape Town variety”, *Journal of Creole Languages* 28,1, (2013), 107.

<sup>397</sup> The language of the ancestral cult requires constant renewal to maintain its secrecy. The VGN members were using words and phrases no longer used by the cults in their communication.



In pointing out how such ancestral cult practices and secret societies influence contemporary youth practice Pratten has argued that masquerade practice constitutes repositories of idioms of youth initiation, and modes of collective covert and overt action,<sup>398</sup> that appeal to youths making claim to securing and protecting their communities in several contemporary contexts. Consequently, there is therefore a dynamic contingent history of secret societies to trace (in my case ancestral cults) and an active, discursive use of the past in the present.<sup>399</sup> As shown from the forgone analysis, the widespread presence of what Pratten describes is not in doubt. In considering its significance however, I differ from Pratten's understanding. According to Pratten, the practice of imbibing and embedding secret society and ancestral cult practices within the repertoires of vigilante policing practice is a representation of claims to pre-colonial legitimacy over rights to land and resource ownership; it is a means of making claims in opposition to the state. These groups, Pratten argues, construct moral communities, deploy physical and spiritual power, and determine when there is a just cause to use these for the good and protection of the community.<sup>400</sup> "They are seen to draw on repertoires of practices and cultural logics linked to the ideology and practices of precolonial initiatory societies."<sup>401</sup> From what I observed in the areas I studied, it seems Pratten's insights do not apply to Plateau State. I would rather suggest that vigilante groups in our context are not in opposition to the state. These practices are not informed by opposition to the state or employed with the state as its target. Rather, they are to engender social legitimacy - vigilantes are not bringing back a forgotten pre-colonial practice. These practices have continued in spite of the arrival and growth of Christianity and Islam. We should perhaps look beyond formulations that understand this particular manifestation as a return of the occult, or secret society. Firstly, while these practices have undergone some changes, they have remained embedded in community consciousness and practices. Therefore, they are not necessarily coming back, which suggests that at some point they were abandoned. Secondly, I would suggest that what we are witnessing are young men deploying local cultural agency to combat manifestations of extreme socio-economic stress in the face of decades of ruthless economic and political restructuring. I argue that to take the appropriation of ancestral cult and secret society practices by vigilante groups as a serious form of return to cultural historical practice is to not understand its function. These practices should rather be seen as an entry point, a livelihood option – simply a means or tool to earn a living. A similar trend would be the boom in

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<sup>398</sup> Pratten, "The rugged life", 99.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., 85.

<sup>401</sup> Pratten, "Singing Thieves", 179.

clergymen as a response to the ruthless economic and political restructuring. When interviewed informants (theoretically) talk about the power of the ancestral cult, how it abhors cheating and backbiting, how it is against them breaking the law, how charms are sacred and sacrosanct etc., the next day (in practice) the same person is collecting a bribe.

### 5.3. The 'Hausanisation' of Policing Practice

The Native Authority institution on the Plateau was also influenced by practices from the emirates. This was particularly because from its inception on the Plateau right up to the mid-1940s, the Native Authority Police in Plateau Province and other Provinces in today's Middle Belt zone of Nigeria were staffed by recruits mainly from the emirates.<sup>402</sup> The fact that most of these NA policemen were of Hausa ethnic extraction emboldened the notion that the British had an agenda of foisting Hausa-Fulani Hegemony, which they had resisted before the advent of colonial rule.<sup>403</sup> Ochuno's notion of 'Colonialism by Proxy' is useful in our understanding of these dynamics.<sup>404</sup> Rotimi aptly captured the sentiments of the Resident of Kabba Province, in his response to the proposed policy from the Protectorate headquarters in Kaduna to introduce emirate-style *dogarai* policing in all Northern Provinces. The Resident was keen to remind headquarters that:

...there was no *dogarai* (in Kabba) and police work was done entirely by the Government Police. Because there was no chiefly political system in most of the Province, the Resident feared that 'it would be impossible at present to start *dogarai* to replace police'. What was more, the people were too truculent to be dealt with by an unarmed body of men. He then warned that for a 'people who have of old successfully held off the Fulani owing to their mountain strongholds and independent characters' the introduction of an institution associated with the Fulani would smack of giving victory to an enemy through the back door.'<sup>405</sup>

However, the traditional rulers who were put in control of the NA police did little to discourage the recruitment of non-indigenous officers. As long as they were in control or perceived to be in control, they had no or few misgivings.<sup>406</sup>

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<sup>402</sup> NAK, 468/208 Jos Native Administration Yan Doka Force-Duties of, May 1937.

<sup>403</sup> Kemi Rotimi, Hegemony through the Backdoor? Colonial Rule and the Extension of the Dogarai Institution to the Non-emirate, Southerly Provinces of Northern Nigeria, Unpublished Paper, p.1.

<sup>404</sup> Ochunu, Colonialism By Proxy...

<sup>405</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>406</sup> Ali Dakshang, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 04.09.2012.

The importing of police from the Hausa emirates entrenched emirate culture and certain forms of palace practice, including turbans, horse riding patrols, and a host of other practices. Significantly, Hausa language was adopted as the official language of the NAs and the titles used for emirate officials were imported into chiefdoms in central Nigeria. Prior to British colonialism, the factors that influenced the spread of Hausa across the middle belt were geographical, cultural, political, and most importantly commercial.<sup>407</sup> Detail accounts of the extensive influence of Hausa trade networks are documented in Lovejoy's two excellent accounts, on kola nut<sup>408</sup> and salt.<sup>409</sup> For our study area, Hausa functioned mainly as a language of commerce. Some parts of Plateau State, were not just markets for these commodities, they were also rest stops for the merchants. In the later periods, two important processes made Hausa significant for the linguistic landscape of the area. With the arrival of Christian missionaries, Hausa was further entrenched as a language of evangelism, conversion, and belief. Then significantly, preference for recruits from the emirates to serve as NA Police was equally informed by this adoption quite early, as Hausa had become the language of administration, thus also the language of policing.

The authorities in Kaduna seized all opportunities they had to underline the importance of Hausa as the language of administration in the North. An example is a 1936 response to the IGP (Inspector General of Police), Major A. Saunders, in which among other things it was, stated "In the Northern Provinces practically all Native Administration work and records are conducted in Hausa. Literacy in Hausa is far more important than in English, save in the townships, which are now policed by the Nigerian Police."<sup>410</sup> Consequently, proficiency in Hausa became a pre-condition for employment as a NA police officer. This was already ensured by the use of Hausa as the medium of instruction at the Police Training Depot (PTD); the police recruit training school in Kaduna. According to Mr. Robin Mitchell, a former colonial police officer (1956-1965), Native Authority police parades and drills were conducted in Hausa<sup>411</sup>. One of the requests at the time that emanated from the non-emirate Provinces on the Plateau was for the government to consider providing language courses for

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<sup>407</sup> Nina Pawlak, *Hausa Outside the Mother Area: Plateau Variety*, (Orientalia Polona, 2002), 14.

<sup>408</sup> Paul Lovejoy, *Caravans of Kola: The Hausa Kola Trade, 1700-1900*, (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press, 1980).

<sup>409</sup> Paul Lovejoy, *Salt of the Desert Sun: A History of Salt Production and Trade in the Central Sudan*, African Studies Series, no.46, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986)

<sup>410</sup> NAI CSO 26/2/31861 Vol. 1, SNP, Kaduna to CSG, Lagos, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1936 quoted from Rotimi, *Hegemony through the back door*, 8.

<sup>411</sup> Robin Mitchell, Interviewed by Jimam Lar, Kent, United Kingdom, 23.08.2013.

prospective recruits rather than demanding that all recruits should demonstrate proficiency before being considered.<sup>412</sup>

Referring to a memorandum prepared on the subject of '*Yan Doka*' for the 1935 Residents conference, Rotimi comments that the government,

Demonstrating its insensitivity to the disadvantage of this policy for the non-Hausa speaking areas...declared that the AIG (Assistant Inspector General), Nigerian Police Force, was unable to accept for training at Kaduna men who could not speak Hausa which was the language of instruction and wondered why some native administrations wished to employ as *Yan Doka* men who could not speak Hausa.<sup>413</sup>

The ethnic composition of the NAPF of the Plateau Province reported in a 1939 provincial police report demonstrates the large presence of ethnic Hausa police officers. Out of a total number of 206 NAPF men, 68 were Hausa; 34 of Igbo descent, 18 Fulani, and 15 Kanuri followed this. The report goes on to state that considerable difficulty had been experienced in finding recruits of suitable standard in the Province.<sup>414</sup> The standard stated here specifically referred to medium level of English literacy. One would however have to question the expectation that in 1939 there would be individuals with the required levels of education who would have fancied a job as an NA police officer. In the 1930s, Hausa literacy was also considered for the very low ranks. In general, the dearth of recruits from the Plateau Province was to only begin to massively change in the wake of post WWII recruitments of ex-servicemen from the Province into the NAPF. Now I turn to the dynamics of involving ex-servicemen in policing practice and the consequent impacts of the policy.

#### **5.4. The Influences of Ex -Servicemen**

When the NAPF was introduced in Plateau Province, there was an initial reluctance to recruit men from the area to serve as NA police. As I have discussed in the forgone section, the policy of the colonial government in regards to eligibility meant that for the Northern Provinces a majority of recruits for the NAPF were drawn from the Hausa emirates. The large number of Hausas in the NAPF was also importantly informed by the fact that Hausas constituted a large number of ex-servicemen who had served in the Northern Nigerian

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<sup>412</sup> Selcan Miner, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos-Nigeria, 7<sup>th</sup>.01.2014

<sup>413</sup> Rotimi, *Hegemony through the back door*, 7.

<sup>414</sup> JosProf 1/1/3641 Plateau Province, Annual Report (Departmental) 1939, Police Plateau Province, 10.

Regiment during the First World War most of the men were in the Cameroonian theatre of the war. In fact, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Nigerians recruited to serve in the colonial army had been almost entirely drawn from the Hausa and the Yoruba. The two groups provided over 80 per cent of the serving soldiers in the Northern and Southern Regiments respectively.<sup>415</sup>

John Barrett in his study of the rank and file of the colonial army during the First World War states that by the time the war broke out the Yoruba and Hausa were no longer as keen as before to join the colonial army; rather they preferred to pursue careers in commerce as traders.<sup>416</sup> The British therefore switched attention to the “excellent pagan tribes available.”<sup>417</sup> Thus by 1916 the majority of men being recruited were drawn from the Fulani, Kanuri, Munchi (Tiv) and other numerous ethnic minorities of the then Northern Provinces, who were simply classified in the records as ‘pagan tribes.’<sup>418</sup> It was thus logical that a higher number of NAPF personnel had an army service background. Importantly, the colonial administration also made it possible for World War I veterans to learn specific skills, which would help them in the process of settling to civilian life. For example, training centres organised schoolmasters to provide English classes for soldiers to improve on the ‘pidgin’ English acquired from the war experience.<sup>419</sup> There was also intensive training in driving and mechanical maintenance.<sup>420</sup> This was particularly the case for the higher echelons of the NAPF.

By the late 1930s to early 1940s when the British were recruiting for the Second World War, a considerable number of men were from the non-emirate groups of the Northern Provinces. Colonial military service in the Second World War created an opening for the recruitment of men for NAPF service from the specific communities where the chiefdoms were established. In 1946, following the end of the Second World War, there was a windfall of recruits in the wake of massive demobilisation and resettlement of Nigerian ex-servicemen who fought as part of the Nigerian Regiment of the British war effort in Burma. While several ex-servicemen rebuilt their lives as farmers in colonial established agricultural programmes,

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<sup>415</sup> John Barrett, “The Rank and File of the Colonial Army in Nigeria, 1914-18” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 15, no. 1, (1977), 105-115.

<sup>416</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>417</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>419</sup> James K. Mathews, “Clock Towers for the Colonized: Demobilization of the Nigerian Military and the Readjustment of its Veterans to Civilian Life, 1918-1925”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 14, no.2, (1981), 254-271.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*

others embraced forms of handwork like carpentry, trading, and tailoring. The main source of employment for ex-servicemen was the N.A. Police, which took the opportunity to increase its force.<sup>421</sup> A decade earlier, the report of a Conference of Residents, Northern Provinces, held in Jos in 1937 commented that recruitment should be encouraged as much as possible from the ranks of ex-soldiers and government police. The report went on to encourage the recruitment of N.A. Police, particularly ex-servicemen from outside of the Province. It stated: “The idea that a tribe or local community will not stand a *Dan Doka* other than of its own tribal stock seems nowadays out of date. If a suitable candidate of local stock is available, well and good, - if not, the disciplined ex-servicemen from elsewhere are preferable to the local never do well who takes on the post as a soft job.”<sup>422</sup> John Hare, a former colonial district officer in the Adamawa Province, recalls the importance of ex-servicemen to the workings of the NAPF in the following words: “ex-soldiers from the Second World War were very important for discipline and efficiency of the NA police”.<sup>423</sup>

Providing further insight on this point, Danladi Tanglar, a former NAPF officer who served in Langtang and Shendam Native Authorities, pointed out that in the late 1940s most recruits of the NAPF came from WWII veterans, precisely because

At this time, no educated person found the job of *Yan Doka* attractive. In the 1920s, *Yan Doka* were Dogarai of Chiefs. However, by the 1940s when Provinces and divisions were created District Officers needed a security force to maintain law and order, but also to assist in collecting taxes. As a former NA police officer, it was very clear to see that the Northern Regional government established the NAPF to provide security and a policing institution for the DOs, Chiefs, and the staff of the local administration.”<sup>424</sup>

In his Annual Report of 1926, the Resident of Plateau Province providing updates on the recruitment of Yan Doka in the Province reiterated this point as he noted that, “...as far as possible the forces (NAPF) are recruited from men of good character who have served their time in the Nigeria Regiment.”<sup>425</sup> Another example that illustrates the reliance on ex-servicemen for NAPF work in the Plateau Province is the 1946 Annual Report: Shendam

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<sup>421</sup> Ndaushep Chenvong Vongbut, interviewed by Jimam Lar Langtang, Plateau state, 2<sup>nd</sup>. 09.2012.

<sup>422</sup> JOSPROF: 468, Report Conference of Residents, Northern Province, 1937, Subject: Yan Doka

<sup>423</sup> John Hare interviewed by Jimam Lar, Kent, United Kingdom, 20.08.2013.

<sup>424</sup> Danladi Tanglar Wuyep, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos, Plateau state, 12.01.2015.

<sup>425</sup> NAK, JosProf 2/18/497/1926, Plateau Province Annual Report for 1926

Division, by the Divisional Officer L.J. Logan. Logan reporting to the higher echelons of colonial authority in Northern Nigeria claimed “...the general level of the Yan Doka is improving, by the retirement of less suitable types in favour of ex-soldiers of good quality.”<sup>426</sup> He goes on to commend the *Yan Doka*, noting “...some ex-soldiers have already shown ability in police work in difficult cases. The present Sarkin Yan-Doka is an ex-Regular Regimental Sergeant Major and a fair percentage of the rank-and-file have had two or even three stripes [ranks] in the army.”<sup>427</sup> The recruitments in 1926 represented the engaging of ex-servicemen from the World War 1, and the recruitments in 1946 were drawn from World War II veterans.

The colonial principle of recruiting ex-servicemen as local police and as staff of the Native Administration in the Plateau Province began after WW1 and continued after WWII. While these men were being recruited to engage in police work, their major source of socialisation and experience had been in the art of soldiering. The hope of the colonial government was that with the right training, they could create local police officers from war veterans. While the ex-servicemen constituted the core of the NAPF, the colonial provincial government made the effort to also recruit ‘suitable’ young men to blend with the ex-servicemen.<sup>428</sup> Particular training schemes were subsequently designed to prepare both categories of recruits for police work. Therefore, the scenario that unfolded was a situation where men who had been conscripted, trained and deployed to Burma to fight during the Second World War were recruited to serve in the NA police force. They brought with them not just the experiences of soldiering, but also the characteristics and ranking systems of the army. An examination of the structure of the NA police does lend more to being a unit of the army, rather than the police. For instance, an officer with the rank of a Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM) runs the NA police at the level or grade of a divisional headquarters like Shendam Lowland Division; the *Sarkin Yan Doka* carried the badge of an RSM. In NAs with a grade lower like Langtang and Wase, the *Sarkin Yan Doka* was a Staff Sergeant, with the *Madakin Yan Doka* (2<sup>nd</sup> in Command) a Corporal.<sup>429</sup>

While the chiefs in the Plateau Province welcomed the designation of 50% or more of recruits coming from ex-servicemen<sup>430</sup>, there was a concern in the emirates that recruiting such a large

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<sup>426</sup> NAK, JosProf 1/1/6451/1947, Plateau Province Annual Report for 1946

<sup>427</sup> Ibid

<sup>428</sup> Ali Dakshang, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Dadur-Langtang North, 7.10.2012.

<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

<sup>430</sup> Benjamin Vongcir, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Langtang, Plateau state, 10.01.2015

percentage of NAPF from ex-servicemen could potentially undermine the Emir's authority and thereby alienate the force.<sup>431</sup> In fact, the then colonial Inspector General of Police, who was more in tune with the practice amongst the emirates, commenting on the high numbers of ex-soldiers availing themselves for NAPF recruitment across the northern Provinces, is quoted to have quipped that "ex-soldiers though excellent raw material have little or no knowledge of police duties."<sup>432</sup> The Assistant Commissioner of Police, in a report on recruitment and training of NAPF for the Plateau Province expressed the same sentiment, voicing his dislike for ex-servicemen; though he did concede, "one or two are useful for drill purposes."<sup>433</sup> However, in view of the fact that the recruitment of NAPF was handled at the Provincial level ex-servicemen did constitute the bulk of recruits of *Yan Doka* in the Plateau Province, until the mid-1950s when the NAs in Plateau began to actively seek recruits with some level of Western literacy to take up responsibilities in administration. This was a decade after the end of WWII so there were no unemployed servicemen left to recruit. The Plateau lowlands, particularly the Tarok community, continued to have a long history of military service during the subsequent decades after independence. Therefore, over the decades, there were a growing number of retired military men resettled within Tarok society and other parts of the Plateau lowlands serving as vigilante group members. Ex-servicemen continually influenced the activities of non-state policing institutions.

The point taken from this section is the fact that in the inter-war years and post-1945 the socialisation of NA policing was based on army ideals and practice. As I have argued previously, in spite of all the efforts and training schemes employed by the government at this time, the socialisation gained from soldiering remained the major influence on policing practices of the NAPF. This was clearly, because most recruits in the first decades of the NAPF were ex-servicemen. This however began to change when the NA police began to recruit Middle School graduates from the early 1950s to the mid-1950s. As more war veterans retired and the NPF instituted more training regimes for the NAPF, the NAPF was informed increasingly by the competencies gained from police training and practice. The annual reports in the 1950s praised the work of the NAPF in the Province. For instance, the Annual Report: Lowland Division<sup>434</sup> 1950 noted how "...the N.A. Police force continues to show considerable improvement both in its general turn out and discipline and in its ability to

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<sup>431</sup> Memorandum, Resident .i/c Kano to Superintendent of Nigerian Police – 11.08.1928

<sup>432</sup> NAK, JosProf. 141/1928, N.A Police Force, Recruitment and Training

<sup>433</sup> NAK, JosProf.468/1942, N.A Jos Division Yan Doka Force Curricular

<sup>434</sup> Formerly Shendam Division.



contribute towards the maintenance of law and order.”<sup>435</sup> The 1955 Annual Report of the same Lowland Division showered glowing commendation on the NAPF, the District Officer D.H. Lloyd-Morgan, was happy to lavish the NAPF with praise, referring to it as “one of the more satisfactory aspects of the Division, under the admirable leadership of the Sarkin Yan Doka (Chief of Yan Doka) it has done some excellent work in the maintenance of law and order and the rounding up of criminals.”<sup>436</sup>

Similar to the NAPF the Nigerian military, particularly the army, had much influence on the socialisation of vigilante groups and vigilante policing. This was informed by the continued involvement of war veterans; in this case, veterans of the Nigerian civil war have continued to constitute the core-training component of vigilante groups. In my study of the current vigilante formation, the VGN, we can clearly identify military influences and practices. I will highlight two instances. In most of the local government branches studied in this thesis, the retired soldiers were responsible for providing training. Retired police officers were responsible for training in Yelwa town in Shendam LGA and some of the vigilante groups in Jos metropolis. These were the exceptions I encountered, but in Langtang North, Pankshin, and other parts of Shendam LGA retired soldiers were prominently involved. In the next section, I turn to colonial police training and how this influenced the policing practice of the NAPF.

## **5.5. Colonial Training and ‘Improvement’ of NAPF**

At a Residents’ Conference in 1928, the term *Yan Doka* was accepted as a suitable nomenclature for the reorganised local policing forces. It was decided to delineate the *Dogarai* from the *Yan Doka*. The *Dogarai* were reverting to their original duties as Emirs’ bodyguards and messengers and the *Yan Doka* as a local police force, to be strengthened and trained towards handling policing responsibilities more competently. The colonial government in Northern Nigeria considered specific measures that would raise the competence and prestige of the Native Authority Police force. In regards to competence, the government acknowledged the need of developing the Native Authority Police into an efficient local police force, with the required skill and training to achieve the purpose of colonial policing.<sup>437</sup> On the question of prestige, the government considered measures that would aid in raising the status and prestige of the N.A. police within their communities

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<sup>435</sup> NAK. JosProf 1/1/6451 Lowland Division, Plateau Province Annual Report, 1950.

<sup>436</sup> NAK. JosProf 1/1/6451 Lowland Division, Plateau Province Annual Report, 1955.

<sup>437</sup> JosProf. 141/1928, N.A Police Force, Recruitment and Training

throughout the Northern Provinces. The government had also acknowledged that the methods of achieving these objectives would vary from one Province to another. For instance, the policy of appointing a member of the royal family as the head of the NAPF enhanced the prestige of the force within the Northern emirates and encouraged a spirit of loyalty to the Emir even in times of crisis.<sup>438</sup> For a Province like Plateau, where several groups did not have a long history of paramount rule, such a policy was unlikely to achieve the same outcome. In sum, the important point to note here is that within the context of the Plateau Province, the early decades of the NAPF (1920s-1930s) were characterised by inefficiency and incompetence. For example, a reading of several pages of archival documents of written communications between the Resident of Plateau Province and the District Officers of the five divisions through the 1930s is replete with the lamentations of the poor conditions of the *Yan Doka*. In response to this, the Resident suggested handing over the responsibility for police duties in the Native Administration area to the NPF, consequently relegating the *Yan Doka* to the position of village guards.<sup>439</sup> Though repeatedly complaining of NAPF incompetence the DOs were nevertheless not suggesting the dismantling of the NAPF; they rather tried to emphasise the advantages NAPF had over the NPF. For instance, the DO of Pankshin, L.H. Goble in a 1937 response to the Resident pointed out the advantages that the *Yan Doka* had over the NPF; he stated, “The existing system of local Yan Doka forces has certain advantages over the Nigeria Police. On the whole Yan Doka are recruited locally and have advantage of knowledge of local languages and customs, apart from closer contact with the population among whom their duties take them.”<sup>440</sup> The DO of the Southern Division S.H.V. White, in his response to the Resident, reiterates on the preferred status of the NAPF for the specific duties of local policing. He however equally provided what may be considered as the way forward, raising the status and improving the conditions of *Yan Doka*.<sup>441</sup> Here, his point was not just about raising efficiency of *Yan Doka*; also critical was the need to improve their conditions of service: salaries, uniforms, and accommodation.

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<sup>438</sup> Rotimi, “Ennobling the Police”, 163-164.

<sup>439</sup> Jos Prof: No.468/211 Conference of Residents Northern Provinces, 1937, Subject Yan Doka, Resident to DOs, 23.08.1937.

<sup>440</sup> Jos Prof: Residents Conference 1937, Subject:-Yandoka, DO Pankshin to Resident, 31<sup>st</sup>.08.1937.

<sup>441</sup> Jos Prof: Conference of Residents, Northern Provinces, 1937, Subject:-Yandoka, DO Wamba to Resident, 30<sup>th</sup>.08.1937.

### 5.5.1 Recruitment Guidelines and Training

In collaboration with the Nigeria Police, the Colonial government at the Provincial levels came up with a general recruitment eligibility guideline for NAPF in the Provinces; this was adopted at the Northern Residents' Conference in 1942.<sup>442</sup> For the purposes of this chapter I will highlight three eligibility criteria, first regards the classification: what sort of man was required; the second point was the individual's age; and third was in regards to literacy, which was also important. First, the government was keen to have men who were believed to be from a "good family." It would be instructive to elaborate from which lens the colonial government understood the notion of a "good family" in 1942. There are the obvious requirements of not having a record of delinquency, breaking the law or having and not having a relative who had such a record. Recruits were drawn from families of Native Authority officials, ranging from clerks and messengers to more important representatives of the system like village and district heads.<sup>443</sup> Moreover, the "good family" was not just prioritised for current recruitments; the government was equally planning. The memorandum, among other things, encouraged Divisional Officers to ensure "...free education should be given...for all sons of N.A. Police entering the Elementary Schools, as an encouragement to literacy amongst the next generation of recruits."<sup>444</sup> Under this process, the traditional rulers primarily initiated the job of recruitment; after all, the NAPF when fully trained would be working within a Native Authority structure and answerable to a traditional ruler. In respect to age of recruitment, the colonial government regarded the best age set as 18-21, and not to exceed 30, unless for a special reason.<sup>445</sup> In regards to literacy, the memorandum encouraged that literates should be encouraged and singled out by the award of shoulder straps, which would be uniform throughout the Native Administration: dark yellow for a literate in Hausa (or the local vernacular) and dark green for a literate in English.<sup>446</sup> English literacy or levels of Western education here should be qualified; from 1940, Standard II was the required level

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<sup>442</sup> Memorandum, Resident. I/c Plateau to Divisional Officers –Native Administration Police Forces, 21<sup>st</sup>. 11. 1942.

<sup>443</sup> Chief Selcan Miner, Interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos-Nigeria, 9<sup>th</sup>. 01.2014

<sup>444</sup> Opcit, Memorandum, Resident. I/c Plateau to Divisional Officers –Native Administration Police Forces, 21<sup>st</sup>. 11. 1942.

<sup>445</sup> Ibid.

<sup>446</sup> Ibid

in the north.<sup>447</sup> By the mid-1950s, the recruitment levels were revised to Middle level, with examples like Tanglar's cohort joining in 1957 with Middle level education.

There was another interesting process that was unfolding in late 1942 in Plateau Province. The Superintendent of Police (SP) A.T.G. Trumble,<sup>448</sup> in charge of the NPF in a memorandum to the Resident had brought forward several suggestions aimed at improving the standards of the NAPF in Plateau Province. Of all he suggested, three points are relevant for our present discussion on training of the NAPF. His first suggestion was to unify the NAPF of the Province as units of the same force, rather than forces within a division. His idea was to place all the men on the same list, and conduct promotions centrally from Jos and not leave it to the divisions. Second point, he was critical and disappointed with some of the *Sarkin Yan Doka* across the Province. In this letter, he particularly mentions those of Pankshin, Southern Division, and Kafanchan. His impression of some of the divisional NAPF chiefs is damning "...not one of these men is capable of imparting any instruction and they exercise very little control. They have ceased to have, if indeed they ever had, any interest in police work; generally speaking they regard themselves in the light of pensioners entitled to be kept for the rest of their lives because of past services."<sup>449</sup> Finally, he recommended a pre-promotion course at Province headquarters, Jos, for all NAPF, assuring the Resident of the willingness of the NPF officers to assist in training, supervision and advice.

In his response, the Resident E.S. Pembleton was quite appreciative and supportive of what he described as "improvement by amalgamation of the various Native Administration police forces in the Plateau Province."<sup>450</sup> He felt the proposals would not interfere with the NAs' control of the forces; he expressed and hoped the proposals would encourage the recruitment of 'local tribesmen' – a major emerging theme that was to take centre stage after the Second World War. However, before the proposals came into practice he desired the views of the Native Authorities. In 1942, there were five divisions in the Province; the federated system of having several NAs within a division with one main NA was still the case. The divisions at the time were Jos, Jema'a, Pankshin, Shendam, and the Southern division. The DOs of the Southern, Jos, and Jema'a divisions favoured the proposals to amalgamate the NAPF of the

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<sup>447</sup> Rotimi, "The Police in a Federal State", 180.

<sup>448</sup> Jos Prof: 468, No.516/96 ASP Jos to Resident, Jos, 21<sup>st</sup>.11.1942.

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

<sup>450</sup> Jos Prof: No. 168/382 The Resident, Plateau Prov. to The SP, Jos, 25.11.1942.

Province; the DOs equally reported the support of the traditional rulers.<sup>451</sup> The Pankshin division was also willing to give the new proposals a trial; the DO however equally expressed some disagreement and mild protest on the charge of incompetence levelled against the *Sarkin Yan Doka* of the division.<sup>452</sup> Interestingly, of all the responses from the DOs the one that particularly stood out was that of Shendam division. The first important point was that the traditional rulers in the division, particularly the Long Goemai, were not enthusiastic about the new proposals. This was largely informed by a reluctance to accept proposals and policies they considered as being formulated at headquarters and of more befitting use for the Jos division. This reservation is expressed in points raised by the DO in his response. Having noted the concerns of the chiefs, he states that:

Consideration of the course syllabus indicates that a fair proportion of it is designed for the constable serving in a populous urban area, while a review of the four subjects in which examinations are held (squad drill, commanding squad, turn out, and criminal law and evidence) discloses that three of them are not really good criteria of an individual's ability to perform police duties...While appreciating the potential benefits of the proposals under consideration, I feel that a great many of the N.C.Os of the bush forces perform the police duties required by the area in which they serve adequately enough and hardly deserve to be supplanted for the small steps in promotion open to them, by strangers possessing greater sophistication in variety of service and, possibly, environment.<sup>453</sup>

In supporting his NA, the DO summed up his own reservations in questions that required elaboration, specifically concerning the suitability of the proposed system of promotion. He desired to know who would decide upon promotion. What steps would be taken to ensure that the bush *Yan Doka* will be given as good a chance of getting on as the product of metropolitan Jos from whose force it is stated that the accelerated promotions, as it were, will at first, in any event, be largely made.<sup>454</sup> The Residents of the Plateau Province with the active support of the regional government in Kaduna therefore employed certain measures, which in their thinking would improve the competence, efficiency and prestige of the NAPF in the Province.

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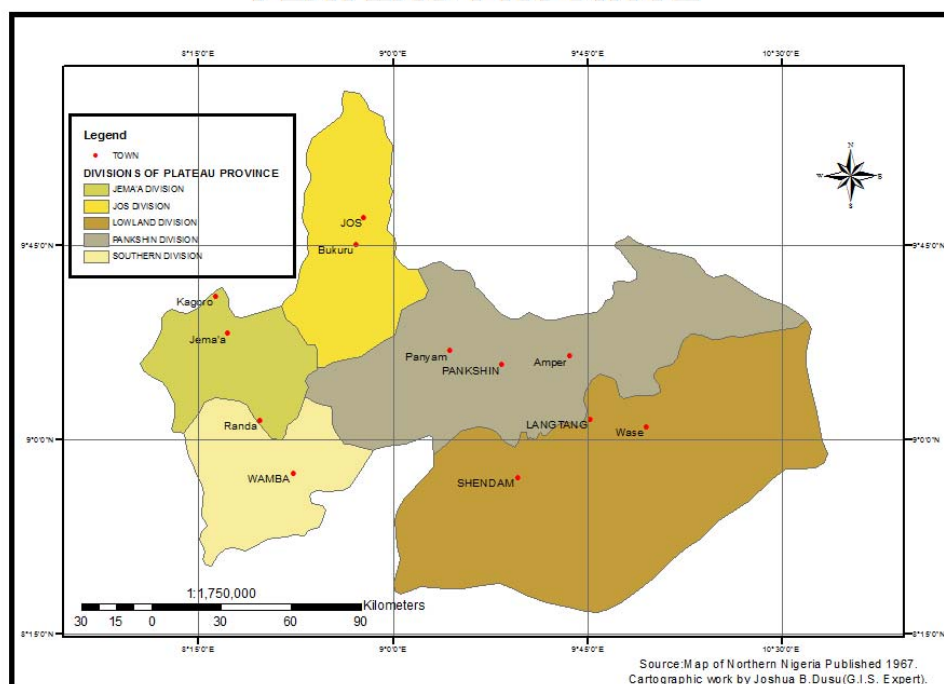
<sup>451</sup> Jos Prof: Native Administration Police Force: 300/194 DO Wamba to Resident, 14.12.1942; 87/258 DO Kafachan to Resident, 4.12.1942; 1098/99A DO Jos to Resident, 10.12.1942.

<sup>452</sup> Jos Prof: Native Administration Police Force, No.3/11/290 DO Pankshin to Resident, 14.12.1942.

<sup>453</sup> Jos Prof: Native Administration Police Forces, No.198/38 DO Shendam to Resident, 7.12.1942.

<sup>454</sup> Ibid.

## PLATEAU PROVINCE



**Figure 7:** Map of Plateau Province showing the five Divisions.

The idea of the government was to develop training schemes that would provide specific training in the particular branch of work the selected NAPF would be involved in, as was the case with the Forestry, Agriculture, Medical and Educational Departments. Training programmes for *Yan Doka* included drills and paramilitary training to instil discipline, training on the rudiments of police work and training in traffic control for those posted to towns. The schedule of the course of instruction for NAPF training included amongst other things: elementary squad drill; care of uniform – washing, starching, ironing, etc.; laws and powers of police- the powers they can legally exercise in the matter of arrests, searches, confessions, evidence, and on police work – patrol, watch and escort duties; motor traffic control- this included the learning of block letters and numerals; elementary knowledge of the traffic liquor and firearms ordinance; court procedure and evidence; use of batons; and the use of firearms (this was eventually expunged).<sup>455</sup>

<sup>455</sup> Ibid.

Recounting his experience in Kaduna when he was on Police training, Danladi Tanglar Wuyep states that the course covered how and when to effect arrest of a suspect, record keeping (criminal records), procedures on prosecuting duties in court, how and when to give evidence, traffic duties, unarmed combat, drill, first aid, and basic police regulations.<sup>456</sup>

“The norms of behaviour” Rotimi notes, that were “...desired by the colonialist were codified in a plethora of laws, ordinances and regulations, some of which were adopted as bye laws and regulations by the native authorities. The police were presumably socialised into the norms through their training programmes. They were expected, thereafter, to use their position as agents of the state to bring the citizenry into similar awareness.”<sup>457</sup>

### 5.5.2. Arming the NAPF

There were other attempts to reform the *Yan Doka* institutions and provide better training for the men. In the late 1920s, the colonial administration of the Northern Provinces desired to arm the *Yan Doka* (Native Authority Police). The idea emerged from the office of the Lieutenant Governor of the then Northern Provinces, with input from his Residents and strong support from the Commissioner of Police, Northern Provinces. The Lieutenant Governor had in fact already recommended the importation of the first batch of weapons for the use of the Kano, Sokoto, and Ilorin NAPFs. The belief was that arming such Native Authority police might be useful in cases of emergency and for the arrest of dangerous criminals.<sup>458</sup> In a letter to the Secretary of State in charge of the Colonies, the Officer Administering the Government (OAG)<sup>459</sup> at the time, having expressed his support for the policy then went on to discourage it in the same letter. It is worth quoting him at length. He wrote:

The policy of Government, however, with regards to the maintenance of armed forces by Native Rulers is set out on page 304 of Political Memoranda (1918 edition), and on page 325 it is expressly stated that Native Administration police may not carry firearms. If the Native Administration police are armed, it may easily happen, as the system

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<sup>456</sup> Danladi Tanglar Wuyep, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos, 12.01.2015.

<sup>457</sup> Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, 179.

<sup>458</sup> Officer Administering the Government (O.A.G) to the Secretary of State for Colonies (S.O.S), 10 April 1929, TNA: PRO, CO583, 8.

<sup>459</sup> This was usually a temporary appointment for periods when the Governor of the Colony is outside the territory or indisposed and unable to perform his duties – Interview with Mr. John Smith, Cheltenham, UK, 17 August 2013.

develops, that within a measurable period of time there would be a large body of armed men, directly under the control of native chiefs, the potential danger of this (sic) cannot be overlooked....<sup>460</sup>

Therefore, at this time the Native Authority Police were not given arms. The situation was however continuously revisited by succeeding Commissioners of Police but without the required support from London and Lagos, it was not achieved. In the report of the 1929 Residents' Conference, the sub-committee on *Yan Doka* virtually brought the matter to a nullifying closure. The first paragraph, from appendix C of this report, did not leave any doubts. It stated, "...the question of arming has now been authoritatively decided, and as the Secretary of State is unable to agree that members of the Native Administration Police should be allowed to carry firearms, much of the correspondence contained in the memorandum on this subject is automatically nullified."<sup>461</sup> This was eventually changed six years after independence. In October 1966 Tanglar Wuyep, a former NAPF Corporal, was amongst 54 NAPF men chosen from across the Northern Region to be trained in firearms.<sup>462</sup> Squad 36 was at the Police College for six months, Tanglar had already served for nine years as a NAPF in Shendam and Langtang. When they returned after the course in August 1967, the Nigerian Civil War had just broken out in July. Having just finished firearms training, amidst the mobilisation for the war effort the option was given to join the army and proceed to the war front, and several NAPF men took the option and joined the army.<sup>463</sup> Selcan Miner emphatically insists that the Native Authority System and its policing arm were not necessarily disbanded; rather it was phased out. He argues that the process should be seen as a transition from "law and order to development administration."<sup>464</sup>

## 5.6. Traditional Rulers as Authors of Local Policing Initiatives

As I have discussed in the preceding chapter, the plural policing landscape (Nigeria Police Force and Native Authority Police Force) that the colonial government bequeathed to the newly independent Nigerian state in 1960, specifically in the Northern region, was dismantled after a decade of independence. The Native Authority Police Force was dismantled in 1969; the competent were absorbed into the Nigeria Police Force and those who were regarded as

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<sup>460</sup> O.A.G, to the S.O.S, 10<sup>th</sup> April 1929, TNA: PRO, CO583, 9.

<sup>461</sup> Jos Prof: 468, 1929 Resident's Conference, Report of sub-committee – Yan Doka, Appendix C.

<sup>462</sup> Danladi Tanglar Wuyep, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 12.01.2015

<sup>463</sup> Ibid.

<sup>464</sup> Ibid.



not fitting the standards were disengaged.<sup>465</sup> The military government had withdrawn the responsibility for policing, as well as the prisons, from the local administration. While the traditional rulers were still licking their wounds, the major onslaught on their administrative authority was unleashed with the enactment of the local government reforms decree in 1976. This was a drastic overhaul of local administration, stripping the traditional rulers of responsibility for local administration, and the coffin that was indirect rule had received its final nail. However, what was to unfold revealed that relieving traditional rulers of responsibility for local affairs via local government reforms could not render the institution dormant. In the wake of the 1969 dismantling of the NAPF and the 1975-76 local government reforms, the non-Muslim traditional rulers in the Plateau Province, who were just coming to grips with their newfound paramouncy, had one major issue to contend. This was a straightforward question, of how to enforce their authority.<sup>466</sup> They had emerged as a very important and powerful institution, and suddenly their responsibilities had been stripped and their tool of enforcing authority no longer existed. Moreover, the responsibility of collecting poll tax remained as one of the few that traditional rulers retained; this was an exercise that sometimes needed to be enforced.<sup>467</sup>

The traditional rulers of the Plateau Province responded creatively to these reforms, which they had regarded as an affront to their authority. It is my contention that this policy, which was authored with the objectives of relieving the traditional rulers of all local administration, including policing, and reducing their status to an advisory role, was inadvertently responsible for ushering in a new chapter of plural policing. The *Yanbanga* or vigilante groups of the 1970s were thus a creative response by the traditional rulers to maintain some level of policing control and relevance within their communities. They were geared towards maintaining a particular kind of socio-traditional order, which was informed by customary legal codes. The *Yanbanga* (vigilantes) of the 70s were largely answerable to traditional rulers, and cultural norms, traditional codes of law and order determined their actions and functions in the communities. However, at the time Christianity had also gained root amongst these communities, the Christian religion was equally influential in informing what vigilantes regarded as a contravention of law and order. This created a scenario particularly concerning issues where Christianity and tradition agreed there was a convergence of codes of law and

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<sup>465</sup> Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, particularly see Chapter 4, "Continuity, Crises and Abolition, 1960-1970."

<sup>466</sup> Selcan Miner, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos-Nigeria, 07.01.2014.

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.*

order. It was not all smooth sailing as points of disagreement emerged in situations where the dual codes were in conflict. One such scenario was the denigration of traditional ancestral cult practices by Christians amongst the Tarok: here the church found itself opposing the traditional religious adherents, and several adherents of traditional religion were equally members of the vigilante group. Vigilante membership included both Christians and traditional religion adherents and often there were tensions between these groups.<sup>468</sup>

Another important feature of these groups at the time was the fact that they were organised at the community level. Their roles were largely limited to preventing and responding to robbery and petty crime in the community. The punishments they meted out to suspected culprits who were found to have contravened societal norms and values and broken traditional codes was varied depending on the crime committed. Two kinds of crime are instructive here. First was the most common crime of theft, one of the classical reasons for establishing vigilantes. The object of theft ranged from small-scale domestic livestock such as sheep and goats, to cattle and stored grains. Where a suspect was found to have committed such a crime, the routine of punishment would involve public flogging, usually at the chief's palace or the town square, followed by a procession with the suspect dancing at the front amid songs of mockery and jest.<sup>469</sup> The *Yanbanga* of this period tended to merge societal legal codes with traditional religious practices. Secondly, capital punishment was also acknowledged as possible punishment for contravening serious codes of the ancestral cult such as leaking secrets of the cult. This was a case of vigilante policing informed by different codes of law and different values. Therefore, within a given territory, there were different legal regimes at work, and to some extent a plurality of practice and punishment. Judgements and subsequent punishment were restorative and largely punitive. An individual found guilty of an offence such as theft could be fined a goat and publicly flogged, and subjected to the dance of shame around the village or the market square.<sup>470</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> Group Interview, Former Yanbanga Dadur, Langtang North, Plateau State, 13.08.2012.

<sup>469</sup> Comparatively see Pratten, "Singing thieves", 194-196.

<sup>470</sup> Group Interview Dadur, Langtang North LGA, 10.08.2012 and Group Interview Shimankar, Shendam LGA, 14.11.2012.

## 5.7. Socialisation by the Police

Previously I have shown how the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) affected policing as it had on all other social services and public employment. There was a decline in employment opportunities and the commercialisation of education, for instance, influenced the transition of youth moving from secondary to tertiary education.<sup>471</sup> In response to the obvious policing challenges that emerged,<sup>472</sup> the Nigerian government actively mobilised the population to embrace forms of non-state policing in the guise of community policing.<sup>473</sup> Therefore, the period of the 1980s ushered in a major change in the socialisation process of vigilantes, from being socialised by majorly ex-servicemen to being socialised by the Nigeria Police. Largely until the mid-1980s, the most critical institution to which plural policing was linked (the Nigerian Police Force) had not had a substantial impact on vigilante policing. I gathered this much in-group interviews conducted with former vigilantes in Dadur, Langtang North LGA<sup>474</sup>, and Shendam, Shendam LGA<sup>475</sup>. In both cases, individuals who had volunteered during the era of structural adjustment had to be registered with the Divisional Police Station and had to participate in a training programme organised by the police. However, as I have earlier mentioned the continued participation of ex-servicemen, at this period veterans of the Nigerian civil war meant that police training did not replace the military influence; it rather blended and intermingled with it. The NPF absorbed about 10,000 demobilised soldiers from 1976-78.<sup>476</sup> The mannerisms and behaviour of the police as an institution was equally influenced by the long years of military rule and the legacies bequeathed. That said, there are aspects of vigilante policing practice that were impacted by the Nigerian Police Force. I consider some of these practices and influences.

### 5.7.1. Police Practice: The Methodology of Policing

One of the more prominent and visible forms of policing that the vigilante groups have copied from the police is the operational idea of the patrol. This remains the most feasible operational

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<sup>471</sup> For more on this see Said Adejumobi, "Structural Adjustment, Students' Movement and Popular Struggles in Nigeria, 1986-1996", in *Identity Transformation and Identity Politics under Structural Adjustment in Nigeria*, Attahiru Jega, ed. (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2000)

<sup>472</sup> This ranged from a shortfall of personnel to insufficient equipment.

<sup>473</sup> For more on the manifestations of this policy see Pratten, "The Thief eats his Shame", *Africa*, 64-83; and Fourchard, "A New Name for an Old Practice", *Africa*, 16-40.

<sup>474</sup> Group Interview, by Jimam Lar, Dadur – Langtang North, 07.10.2012.

<sup>475</sup> Group Interview, by Jimam Lar, Shendam, Shendam LGA, 14.11.2012.

<sup>476</sup> Marenin "Policing Nigeria: Control and Autonomy in the Exercise of Coercion" p.80, taken from *Nigeria Police Magazine* (1978), New Series 35, April – September, 20-21.

method of checking and curtailing the activities of criminals. For the vigilantes patrol is often not motorised, as there only but a few vigilante detachments that have patrol cars.<sup>477</sup> Vigilante patrol is foot patrol, mostly at night when the community is sleeping. The vigilantes are up awake engaging in the hard work that allows the community sleep safely at night. In all the interviews I conducted with retired and current vigilante members, the patrol is common practice. The patrol was the very first policing practice that vigilante groups' members imbibed. Similarly, as the Nigerian police instituted the practice of roadblocks and checkpoints into patrol practice, vigilante groups began doing the same. The practice of vigilante patrols has continued to be part of contemporary vigilante policing practice. The basic operational equipment vigilante members require for night patrol include flashlights, warm clothing, raincoats, boots, and whistles. I present two accounts drawn from my observation of vigilante patrols in the next chapter.

### **5.7.2. Record Keeping**

Vigilante groups have also become proficient in the practice of record keeping, or to be more precise keeping evidence against suspects and offenders. One of the essential aspects of police practice is the process of collecting evidence and information and processing it. It is critical to assemble the facts of a case, obtain and record statements, and ensure that all exhibits are collected, labelled and safely kept. All these documents and materials are stored in case files. Vigilante groups have adopted this practice but because of limited literacy levels vigilante policing, rather than collect written statements, prefers to collect oral statements of suspects. On completion of interrogation, the photographs of the suspect are usually taken with the stolen item in cases of theft and robbery. The photographs are then printed and used as evidence handed over to the police. During interviews with the vigilante public relations officer of Pankshin LGA, Monday Joshua, the pictures of offenders taken over the years were used to render the account of what transpired in each case. He narrates the procedure of handing over evidence to the police:

We learned this practice from our elders. Those who started this work in the 1980s. Whenever we catch a suspect and confirm that he committed the offence or crime, when we are handing over to the police, they require evidence; usually, an oral statement is not adequate, this was why the former vigilante members began taking pictures and we still do it. For example if it is a case of theft or robbery, we always snap the thief with the stolen items and when we

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<sup>477</sup> However, as of July 2015 while I was concluding the thesis the Plateau state government distributed patrol vans for the VGN in the 17 local government areas.

go to court we do not need to talk much, the picture does all the talking.<sup>478</sup>

Pictures are also relevant for the wards and units to communicate to the local government commander that they are not resting on their laurels. The following pictures show some suspects being displayed with the stolen items recovered from them.

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<sup>478</sup> Monday Joshua, Interviewed by Jimam Lar, Pankshin, 08.01.2015.



**Figure 8:** Picture of Jing Vigilante, Pankshin LGA, suspected thief with recovered sheep (ewe).

**Figure 9:** Another Picture of Jing Vigilante, Pankshin LGA, with recovered motorcycle. Photos provided from VGN file.

### 5.7.3. The Uniform

For a vigilante group member aspiring for recognition as part of the policing system - 'stateness' is bestowed by the mastery of how to talk (the language of policing), how to act (the everyday practice of policing), and what one wears (symbols of policing).<sup>479</sup> The uniform is the principal symbolic marker of stateness, the instinctive symbol of officiousness; it is a signifier, an insignia of authority. It bestows on the police and the vigilante the legitimacy to act. The expectation is that such action will be in the interest of the public good, but as I have shown in this study, it is not always the case. Osoba captures the role of the uniform in the misappropriation of authority when he notes that, "There is no tyrant more vicious, narrow-minded, self-centred and insufferably exhibitionist than a primary educated Nigerian dressed in a brief robe of authority."<sup>480</sup> However, as I have repeatedly argued there is more to it than this, as the power of the uniform is twofold: it grants a person the power to construct a livelihood, a relationship, and access to state services, as well as the power to destroy a livelihood, a relationship, and access.<sup>481</sup> In a sense, the uniform speaks to the aspirations of vigilante group members desirous of being part of the state policing system; it also shows the public, the community, that the vigilante can act for and on behalf of the police. Once in uniform, the vigilante member is not required to convince of his authority. The uniform as Poppe has argued is visible proof that one is entitled to act as a law enforcer. In this sense, they (vigilantes) emerge as mediators between the state and the community.<sup>482</sup>

The uniform is equally a symbol of hierarchy. Another abiding evidence of the combined influence of the army and police on vigilante policing practice is the hierarchical structure of the vigilante rank system. The titles of the ranks carried by vigilante officers and men are tailored more towards the military and the police. Some examples will suffice: The rank of the National Chairman is designated as the Commander General, with six Deputy Commander Generals. There are Commanders in charge of Community Security, Arms Control, Conflict

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<sup>479</sup> Steffen Jensen, "Security and violence on the frontier of the state: vigilant citizens in Nkomazi, South Africa," in *Violence and Non-Violence in Africa*, Pal Ahluwalia, Louise Bethlehem, and Ruth Ginio, eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 118.

<sup>480</sup> Segun O. Osoba, "Factors Militating against Creative and Socially Relevant Intellectual Activity in Colonial and Post-Colonial Nigeria," in *The Indigenous for National Development*, G.O. Onobonoje, K. Omotoso and D.A. Lawal, eds. (Ibadan: Onobonoje Press and Book Industries, 1976), 71-97.

<sup>481</sup> Julie Poppe, Julie "The Power of the Uniform: Paramilitary Foresters and Rangers at the W Park, Burkina Faso." *Sociologus*, vol. 63, (2013), 28. doi:10.3790/soc.63.1-2.11

<sup>482</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

Resolution, Anti-Robbery, and Anti-Terrorism. Designations of a commanding officer are more of military practice; the police have more of inspectors and superintendents. When one looks at lower ranks, the similarity to police ranks is evident. The local government Chairman of the VGN is designated a Superintendent, a ward head has the rank of an Inspector, and a unit head usually in charge of a village detachment is designated as a Sergeant.<sup>483</sup> The ranks on the uniforms are not just for the sake of it, it is much more than window dressing, a superior vigilante officer does have authority to give orders and commands to his subordinates and the subordinates are obliged to obey. More so, there are sanctions and penalties in the event of disobedience or insubordination. The following three pictures illustrate how the uniform of vigilante group members has evolved over the years.



**Figure 10:** Vigilante Members Dadur, Langtang North 1988.

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<sup>483</sup> Alhaji Garba Juji, interviewed by Ibrahim Yunus, 26.09.12





**Figure 11:** VGN Pankshin LGA, at state training camp, 2014.

**Figure 12:** VGN Langtang North LGA, LGA leaders, 2012. (Pictures retrieved from VGN File.)

## 5.8. Conclusion

The current plural policing landscape in Plateau State, Nigeria, is a product of different influences that have been exerted in the course of the past century. Some influences have been consistent, while others were restricted to particular periods. The earliest and most profound influence on policing was that of the military. This process of socialisation has been midwived by Nigeria's war history (First and Second World Wars and the Nigerian Civil War). In this chapter I have shown how from the NAPF to the VGN, the alternative policing structures that engaged in policing alongside the NPF have absorbed war veterans and retirees in quite large numbers. Socialisation was based on army ideals and practice because most recruits in the first instance were soldiers. I have shown how influence of the military was so pervasive that even when the police engaged in socialising vigilante groups from the early 1980s, and particularly after the implementation of structural adjustment programme, military socialisation continued. After decades of military rule, the police themselves had not come out of it unscathed. In sum, the Nigerian military had played an instrumental role in the socialisation of institutions, groups, and individuals who make claim to providing policing services and the maintenance of law and order.

Influences drawn from the immediate socio-political landscape, cultural templates of law and justice, and the interventionist state-sponsored socialisation, as manifest in the influences of the colonial and post-colonial state police, have all affected the institutional development of plural policing in Nigeria. Vigilante groups simultaneously draw on state and non-state registers.<sup>484</sup> What emerges from this chapter and analysis of socialisation is that we are currently witnessing an advanced stage of institutionalised plural policing, but it is not yet definitively formed. This explains why I have been cautious not to designate the current forms of plural policing as hybridisation. Rather, the process is yet still unfolding. The recent active involvement of vigilante groups and hunter associations in the fight against the Boko Haram insurgency in northeast Nigeria, to cite an example, has created new dynamics of socialisation, institutionalisation and legitimation of plural policing. If this chapter was about how the NAPF and the vigilante groups learned policing practices, the next chapter turns the spotlight on what constitutes the practice of policing by the NAPF and the vigilante groups.

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<sup>484</sup> Poppe, *The Power of the uniform*, 31.

How has this plurality of socialisation influenced policing practice historically and in contemporary Plateau State? What kind of policing practices does this socialisation create? I now consider this discussion.

## **Chapter Six: The Plurality of Policing in Practice (c.1945 to late 1990s)**

### **6.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, I focus on micro narratives - on the factors and practices that have transformed plural policing from its starting point based on relations of power, to its current form based on relations of authority, as power and legitimacy have converged. State policing in Nigeria from the onset was instituted on a plural basis; the colonial Northern Nigerian policing landscape comprised the Nigerian Police Force and the Native Authority Police Force. I argue that plurality within the context of Nigerian policing has to be approached and understood by studying three periods. In this chapter, two of the three periods are examined. First is plural policing in Plateau Province during the colonial era. Secondly, the emergence of vigilante groups in the late-1970s, following the dismantling of Native Authority Police in 1969. This period extended to the mid-1980s with mobilisation of vigilante practice as community policing amidst the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP). In sum, the key objective of this chapter is to examine the historical trajectory of plural policing from the lens of the NAPF and later variations of plural policing actors. Of relevance are the historical dynamics that have driven everyday practices. Who joins, and why? How did (do) vigilante group members see their roles? How has the composition changed over time?

Therefore, plural policing is explored as practice, with its varied dynamic empirical manifestations. Also of importance is a consideration of the relationship of the NAPF, vigilante groups and the NPF, seen particularly from the lens of the NAPF and the vigilante groups. How did they understand their roles within this plural policing landscape? How did the NPF regard them? The chapter also analyses violence as policing practice. Again as with the preceding chapter, this chapter's narrative is historicised.

### **6.2. Plurality and the Practice of Policing on the Plateau (1945 - 1970)**

As was the case in other British colonial territories, the work of the police was informed and guided by the provisions of a Police Ordinance. Among other things, the ordinance laid out conditions of service, disciplinary matters and offences, the powers and duties of police officers – including the powers of arrest, search, and control of assembly and use of arms.<sup>485</sup> In theory, the colonial police force was established along principles of British policing philosophy, the idea of preserving order and the prevention of crime being the primary

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<sup>485</sup> Anthony Clayton, *The Thin Blue Line: Studies in Law Enforcement in Late Colonial Africa*, Oxford Development Records Project Report (1), (Oxford: Rhodes House Library, 1985), 6.

concerns.<sup>486</sup> Secondly, police are to be seen as agents of the law rather than agents of government. However, as I have argued in previous chapters the police in colonial Nigeria were structured and organised to serve the state rather than the people. This has been a major theme in the literature on Nigerian colonial policing.<sup>487</sup> The point to consider is that while this is true, it is a simple narrative and does not adequately account for the colonial policing landscape. While engaging in the service of the colonial government, for the Nigeria Police Force, and the Native Authority for the NAPF, both institutions also engaged in basic policing work.

Drawing on existing literature and my own research on colonial policing it is convincing that the establishment of the Native Authority Police was driven by the desire to offset the insufficient manpower that was not available to police the length and breadth of the colonial territory. It was not feasible to enforce colonial authority with the limited constabulary forces that may have been adequate for conquest; administration presented different challenges to the colonial government. As I have discussed in chapter five, having established Native Authority structures as part of the indirect rule system, a local policing arm as part of the blueprint was seen as a logical need.<sup>488</sup> As Ahire has argued, the “NA police were needed to sustain the authority of indigenous rulers and, in that way, to maintain order within the framework of ‘customary law’”<sup>489</sup>. He goes on to make the point that:

The NA police were therefore charged with the control of conventional crime, not because of their expertise in state law, but because they were versed in custom and tradition. The materially and institutionally weak colonial state formally recognized and incorporated ‘customary law’ into the overall legal system... the NA police undertook the maintenance of order, and thus enabled state authority to flow into colonial society through ‘customary channels’.<sup>490</sup>

These were the origins of instituting plural policing. The formalisation of this policy came along with the Native Authority Ordinance of 1918, which amongst other things granted all

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<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>487</sup> This argument is well developed in Ahire, *Imperial Policing*.... In addition, Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*...

<sup>488</sup> SNP Zaprof. 5193/1908, Memo on Police Reorganization by the High Commissioner, Percy Girouard, 1908.p.1

<sup>489</sup> Ahire, *Imperial Policing*, 45.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*

recognised emirs and chiefs the responsibility of maintaining law and order in their domains, consequently empowering them to employ NA police in pursuance of this mandate.<sup>491</sup>

The job of a NAPF officer on a given day could range across a number of duties. Normal station duty could include tax collection enforcement, policing the local market – which would include regulating the use of weights and measures inspection, and arresting unlicensed traders - protection for a visiting colonial officer - this could be the Resident or a senior police officer from the provincial headquarters - and the parade ceremony occasioned by such a visit. Aside from their primary role of policing the designated Native Authority area, the NAPF remained a very important and significant enforcement arm of the traditional rulers, and a critical policing arm of the colonial state. Though the introduction and deployment of NAPF in the Plateau Province came after the force had been established in the northern emirates, by 1939 the Plateau Province had more NAPF than any other Northern Province. This number increased during the Second World War, and when sub-native authorities were established in the 1950s more NAPF had to be recruited.

Table 5.1 Distribution of NAPF in Northern Province in 1939<sup>492</sup>

Province	Number
Adamawa	69
Bauchi	123
Benue	66
Bornu	149
Ilorin	91
Kabba	187
Kano	338
Katsina	177
Niger	104
<b>Plateau</b>	<b>375</b>
Sokoto	361
Zaria	141
Total:	2,181

<sup>491</sup> Native Authority Ordinance, (No.14 of 1916), pp.800-806.

<sup>492</sup> Source: Memorandum on the training and instruction of Native Administration police in Nigeria, by Inspector General, Colonel A.S. Mavrogodato, 18<sup>th</sup> March 1939, Culled from Ahire, Imperial Policing, 47.

### 6.2.1. NPF and NAPF Relations

There are sufficient archival records and insightful interpretations of these records<sup>493</sup> to conclude that the relationship between the NPF and the NAs in northern Nigeria was more fractious than cordial. The caveat is that while this was the case at the regional administrative level, at the provincial and divisional level there was more variation. The northern regional government had continually resisted the idea of subordinating the NAPF to the NPF in Northern Nigeria and consistently resisted any policy move or proposal from police headquarters in Lagos that suggested doing this. For several decades, the relationship between the NPF and the NAs was defined by a 1919 policy generally referred to in the literature as the 'Uniacke code.'<sup>494</sup> The main thrust of the policy was the subordination of government police to the then *Dogarai* and later NAPF, concerning all matters that were of local interest.<sup>495</sup> As earlier discussed when Palmer assumed duty as Lieutenant Governor in Kaduna in 1925, the relationship between Lagos and Kaduna further deteriorated.

Subsequently, succeeding Inspector Generals of Police at the Lagos headquarters of the force would consistently attempt to challenge or circumvent the code without success. As they had to contend with the northern colonial administration that had been convinced and won over by what they considered an effective means of enforcing local administration, they were not going to allow the NPF take over the running of the NAPF.

The relationship between the NPF and the northern regional government speaks to a broader contextual conflict within colonial Nigeria, a conflict between colonial administrative officers serving in the north and their counterparts in the south. For British nationals who served as NPF officers it was normal to be transferred from south to north and vice versa.<sup>496</sup> This was not the case for administrative officers. Once posted to a region, they were rarely transferred out. After a tour, an Officer would be transferred to another Province within the same region. Over time, they developed loyalties for the systems and administrative structures they were presiding over.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>493</sup> Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, 44-59.

<sup>494</sup> The policy was named after its initiator, the then Inspector General of the Police Forces for the northern region Captain A.G. Uniacke.

<sup>495</sup> For more on this see Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, 18.

<sup>496</sup> *The Thin Blue Line...* This point is clearly highlighted in a publication that documented the experiences of British colonial police officers.

<sup>497</sup> John Smith, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Cheltenham, UK, 17.08.2012, and John Hare, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Kent, UK, 21.08.2012.

### 6.2.2. The Native Authority Police Adviser(s)

An aspect of operational work where the NPF and NAPF did come into cooperation, albeit with occasional cases of friction, was the secondment of NPF officers as Native Authority Police Advisers (NAPF Adviser). Robin Mitchell is a British former police officer who served in Northern Nigeria from November 1955 to July 1965. He had a stint (single tour) in the Jos Minefields from 1960 to 1961 and before that was NPF Adviser Bauchi Province, from 1959 to 1960, and he had this to say about the role of the NPF Adviser:

To be sincere with you our job as Adviser required a lot of discretion. To start with, it depends on which Province one was posted. Looking back my impression was that the NA police did generally okay. However, one has to point out that it did vary across the region; some places were effective and other places not so effective. In very simple terms, some were very good, some were indifferent, and some were bad and inefficient. In Bauchi, I can remember several instances where N.A. Police conducted investigations and provided evidence for subsequent prosecution. The N.A. Police in some instances came to court and presented the evidence, mostly in Hausa but by the late 1950s also in English.<sup>498</sup>

To explain the broader national context of the relationship between the NPF and the NAPF, I refer to an instance that highlights the rivalries that existed at the time. In 1936 a memorandum was authored by the then IGP of the NPF, Major A. Saunders. In this memorandum, Major Saunders among other things sought to regulate the activities of the NAPF through some novel terms and conditions he proposed to introduce in the procedure of seconding European police officers to serve as NA Police Advisers.<sup>499</sup> The Northern Nigerian government rejected his proposals, by recapitulating the Uniake code from 1919 and stating their preference for the NAs to continue to have administrative and operational control over the NAPF. There was, however, a caveat, at the Residents' Annual Conference of 1937. While not forfeiting control of the NAPF in any form or manner within the emirates, the Northern regional government, i.e. the Lieutenant Governor and his Residents, did concede that the NPF could have an upper hand in the southern Provinces of the Northern Region; what came to be referred to as the Middle Belt. This was of course a part of the region that was referred to in derogatory terms, as 'pagan tribes' or 'certain backward areas'.<sup>500</sup>

This again reveals the double standards that obtained in the politics of the Northern Region. The Northern Government was often preoccupied with the interest of the emirates and not

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<sup>498</sup> Robin Mitchell interviewed by Jimam Lar, Kent, UK, 21.08.2012.

<sup>499</sup> For more details on this, see Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, 46-47.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.



necessarily the entire region. However, even in the so-called ‘backward areas’ there were occasional feuds and resistance to the activities of NPF officers posted to serve as advisers, albeit of a different kind. These problems emerged largely because when posted to the southerly Provinces of the region, to places like Plateau, the advisers tended to want to serve in executive and operational capacity and not as advisors or training officers as the NAs had thought of them. An apt example of this from the Plateau Province is a fractious feud that had ensued between Audu Bako, the NPF Police Adviser, and the Jos NA Council from 1956-57. Rotimi<sup>501</sup> highlights two issues that had characterised the row between the council and its NPF Adviser. The first concerned the council’s attempt to curtail irregularities in the payment of NAPF salaries. Previously, it was within the Advisers schedule to pay the NAPF salaries. However, in its attempt to check the aforementioned irregularities the council decided to appoint a treasury staff to pay in collaboration with a police officer appointed by the Adviser. Bako saw this as an attempt by the council to encroach into his sphere of influence; it was also a contravention of the rules. Interestingly, my two main former NAPF informants Danladi Tanglar and Rufai Abubakar both praised Audu Bako as a professional and dedicated officer whom they believed improved the discipline and efficiency of the NAPF in the Province. As he was based in Jos, Rufai Abubakar recalled the feud over salary payments, as follows:

...for several months, we were not sure where to go and collect salary; there were several memos and counter memos. To be sincere with you at our level, I was not sure what the problem was; remember I had joined in 1953. We heard stories of problems between our *Maigida*<sup>502</sup> (our Boss) and the Chief, but we never confirmed the details. To be sincere with you we did not particularly care about who was paying; as long as we were paid, we continued with our work.<sup>503</sup>

The second issue was the council’s long standing agitation to have an indigenous head of the NAPF. The council had favoured an indigene to replace the soon to retire Chief of Police, Mamman Doso, who was Hausa. Again, Bako rebuked the council for going beyond their jurisdiction, advising them to seek for his advice on critical decisions and desist from taking decisions and merely informing and instructing him to carry out. This feud rumbled on until Bako was transferred, and eventually the council had its way with the appointment of Sgt Sallau Udu as Chief of NA Police in 1957.<sup>504</sup> As Rotimi has noted, the feuds between Audu

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<sup>501</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>502</sup> *Maigida* in Hausa means head of the household; here it is used in an honorific manner.

<sup>503</sup> Rufai Abubakar, interviewed by Yunus Ibraheem, Jos, 05.12.2014.

<sup>504</sup> Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, 90-91.

Bako and the Jos NA Council has to be situated within the politics of the time. The Jos NA Council at this time was led by the Chief of Jos and President of the NA Council, Rwang Pam (Berom), and dominated by members from the indigenous groups who never liked the staffing of the NAPF with Hausa men, and in fact all ‘non-indigenes’.<sup>505</sup> In fact, ethnic competition between the Berom and Hausa was, in effect, competition to control political power, economic wealth, and maintain patronage circles, and this manifested in various disputes. Importantly, the disputes included attempts to control the police, appointments to the NA, and the allocation of land.<sup>506</sup>

The Resident of Plateau Province in 1950, C.R. Niven, in a letter to the Snr. Asst. Superintendent of Police (NPF) in Jos, responded to what he regarded as “confusion over the position of the Police Officer attached (NPF Adviser) to the Province to advise on NA Police matters.” This was of course several years before Bako’s feud with the Jos NA. This demonstrates that in 1950 this was already an issue. Amongst other things, Niven noted “...there is a tendency for the Jos NA Police to be treated as though it were part of the Nigeria Police. Though it is important that there should be very close co-operation between these forces the accepted policy is that they should be treated as distinct bodies with distinct control.”<sup>507</sup> Niven further states that

I am aware that the situation here is not as simple as it is in the emirates but the principles are the same...the police officer attached for these special duties is required to advise the NAs on the use of their Police and to superintend their training, equipment and action on duty and so on. His duties in this respect are not confined to Jos, but he is expected to tour and advise in the other divisions.<sup>508</sup>

While trying to protect his NAs against perceived ‘over bearing’ control of the NPF Niven was conceding the privilege to the NPF Adviser to tour the NAPF detachments and supervise the NAPF.

The response of the Police Superintendent was more of a rebuttal than an acceptance or confirmation. In spite of this, the offer to tour the divisions for instance can only be seen as a privilege that was not easy for the NPF Advisers to secure in the emirates. As previously discussed, the disputes within the police in Jos NA were minor in comparison to the conflicts

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<sup>505</sup> Ibid., 88.

<sup>506</sup> Dudley, *Parties and Politics*, 237.

<sup>507</sup> JosProf: 468 Vol.IV, N.A. Police-Supervision of, Resident, Plateau Province to Snr. Asst Supt. of Police, Jos.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid.

that the NPF Advisers had in the emirates. An instructive example is taken from the Zaria NA in the mid-1950s. From 1955-1957 the Zaria NA disregarded several complaints of four successive NPF Advisers regarding the incompetence and corruption of an NAPF Chief of Police.<sup>509</sup> Rotimi highlights examples from Kano, Katsina and Adamawa NAs where, as was the case in several other emirates, the NAPF Chief was of royal exclusivity, with occupants of the position not only held in high prestige, but also subsequently graduated to Emirship.<sup>510</sup> Opposition to the decisions and actions of the NPF Adviser in Jos were not informed by the same factors that drove opposition to NPF Advisers in the emirates. The Jos NA Council was not directing its opposition to Lagos or the NPF as was the case in the emirates; rather they believed they were resisting northern Hausa domination, being foisted on them by the British.

In spite of these rows, when considered over time and when the Plateau Province is taken as a whole, the NPF Police Adviser was one of the rare areas where the NPF and the NAPF did cooperate in Plateau Province. In spite of the conflicts and crisis with some of the chiefs and NA councils, the NPF Advisers actually had a professional and cordial relationship with the NAPF. The NPF Adviser was in practice a *de facto* head of NAPF policing in the Province. For instance, while it was difficult for the NPF to institute inspection of NAPF detachments amongst the northern emirates,<sup>511</sup> this was routine practice in Plateau Province. The NPF Adviser undertook regular inspection tours and visits to the divisions. The itinerary of such trips included an honorary inspection of drills and parades; a review of cases, to ascertain that rules and procedures were being diligently followed; and holding meetings with the police officers, usually aimed at providing any new updates from headquarters, but also to hear any concerns or needs of specific divisions.<sup>512</sup> Danladi Tanglar recalls some of the NPF Advisers and other areas of collaboration with the NAPF:

...in those days when I joined the NAPF, we had ASPs attached to the Provinces. They called them Advisers of NA police. The adviser visits all NA police stations at the divisional, and sometimes NA and sub-NA headquarters. Sometimes, if there are arguments on command, drill, investigation, or how we should behave the station officer will direct that we wait for the Adviser to come, clarify, and instruct. During my years of service, we had five NA Police Advisers. There was Mr Bako (Audu Bako), Mr Futungoe, Mr Obiri, Alhaji Yahaya Doma, and the last Adviser before we were absorbed by the NPF in 1969 was Mr Obanero... In regards our relationships with the NPF,

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<sup>509</sup> Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, 86-89.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*, 83-86.

<sup>511</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>512</sup> Danladi Tanglar interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos, 12.01.2015.

sometimes when there is a major operation, like a major government event - a VIP is visiting the division for instance, or there is a major political rally - then we collaborate with the NPF. We also collaborate when there is a major case to investigate like homicide, or suicide. In a case like suicide, it could be drowning or fire; this is a coroner's case. Usually we work in collaboration with the NPF, relevant forms are signed by the DO, and then the Magistrate gives the order for a post-mortem examination. The CID handles all other matters after this.<sup>513</sup>

The District Officer of the then Lowland Division in his annual report for 1953 commended the cordial relationship between the NPF and the NAPF, also mentioning collaborations in criminal investigations. Mr E. Broadbent had noted, "Relations between the N.A. force and the local detachment of the Nigeria Police have continued to be satisfactory and they have co-operated successfully in a number of criminal investigations."<sup>514</sup>

### **6.2.3. The Nigerian Police Special Branch: Understanding Local Intelligence**

One of the most important areas of cooperation between the NPF and the NAPF was the role the NAPF played in gathering local intelligence and keeping the NPF and the government at the provincial headquarters informed. In the 1939 Annual Report on the police in the Plateau Province, Senior Assistant Superintendent A.T.G Trumble was already commending that the "very close cooperation between the Nigeria Police and the Native Administration Police has resulted in the successful investigation of a number of burglaries and tin stealing crimes. There has been a regular interchange of information between the Nigeria Police and the Native Administration Police which has led to the recovery of stolen property and the apprehension of criminals."<sup>515</sup> To understand this critical role, a brief historical background of the Nigeria Police Special Branch (SB) is instructive. The core obligation of the Special Branch was policing all activity that the colonial government regarded as subversion and sabotage. O'Sullivan,<sup>516</sup> one of the important police officers who drove the development of the Special Branch in Lagos and Kaduna, serving as the Northern Nigerian head of the SB from 1948 to 1958, in his memoir noted that between 1948 – 1954 there was no serious security problem in the north, only minor ones like chieftaincy disputes, labour unrest, and militant Islam.<sup>517</sup> O'Sullivan recounts how he restructured and reorganised the northern wing of the SB. First, he reorganised the records, adding new material covering past years,

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<sup>513</sup> Ibid.

<sup>514</sup> NAK JosProf. 1/1/6451 Annual Report, E. Broadbent, D.O. Lowland Division, 1952, para.9.

<sup>515</sup> JosProf 1/1/3641 Plateau Province, Annual Report (Departmental) 1939, Police Plateau Province, 38.

<sup>516</sup> O'Sullivan's Memoirs summarised in *The Thin Blue Line*...

<sup>517</sup> Ibid.

producing an intelligence survey and an assessment with a summary of counter-intelligence targets. Secondly, he commenced the retraining of his core staff in counter-espionage and counter subversion, and reporting intelligence. Furthermore, he emphasised the importance of local intelligence and the recruitment of agents and informants.<sup>518</sup>

In the Plateau Province, the major security challenge that confronted the colonial government and kept the SB engaged was the political activity that swept across central Nigeria in the 1950s. From the mid-1950s, central Nigeria became a major hub for the emergence of ethnic unions. An example of this in the Plateau Province is the Yergam Union profiled in chapter five. These ethnic unions emerged with aspirations of ethnic advancement and enlightenment, embracing Western education, and frowning on behaviours, which they regarded as 'backward'. However, they also became politically active and established alliances with larger nationalist parties agitating for more administrative emancipation, and eventually self-rule. The colonial government at the time relied on the NAPF to provide information on the activities of the key leaders of these ethnic unions. Danladi Tanglar Wuyep<sup>519</sup> and Rufai Abubakar,<sup>520</sup> former NAPF officers who served in Shendam, Langtang and Jos Native Authorities, relate how it was obligatory to produce weekly intelligence reports on the activities of the ethnic unions.

According to Tanglar Wuyep, local politicians in Shendam briefed them on two occasions. The politicians were members of the then Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the main thrust of the briefing was to receive directives to specifically monitor the activities of opposition politicians in the run up to the elections. According to Tanglar,

There was this day we were called to a meeting and one of the local politicians informed us he had a message from the Wazirin Shendam (Michael Buba, a frontline NPC member and regional minister during the First Republic). Largely the main points were on the need for us to be on the lookout for opposition politicians and their anti-*Arewa* (anti-north) propaganda. However, the UMBC won the elections. I remember at the time - not sure of the year - but George Yilgwen was elected to the Northern House of Assembly, to represent Lowland West constituency.<sup>521</sup>

Rufai referring to similar experiences in Jos recounts how the NAPF were charged to monitor and report on the activities of the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU), which was

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<sup>518</sup> Ibid.

<sup>519</sup> Danladi Tanglar Wuyep interviewed by Jimam Lar, 12.01.2015.

<sup>520</sup> Alhaji Rufai Abubakar interviewed by Yunus Ibraheem, 05.12.2014.

<sup>521</sup> Danladi Tanglar interviewed by Jimam Lar, 12.01.2015.

very popular amongst the Hausa of Jos. Interestingly, Rufai himself was a NEPU sympathiser. Again, this gives credence to the point that the NAPF were not all ‘zombies’ in the service of the NPC keenly waiting for orders to arrest and detain opposition politicians. As members of their various communities, they were also politically engaged, and informed. Rufai recalls how NAPF officers with sympathy for NEPU engaged in leaking operational details of arrest orders. According to Rufai, the more common charge against NEPU members was concerning their holding of political meetings without the necessary permit; along with this was ‘the charge of conduct that disturbs the peace.’ Rufai explains that,

As members of the NAPF, we were expected to be loyal to the NA. The Jos NA was NPC, but NEPU was very popular in Jos, particularly amongst the Hausa. There were several of us who secretly supported NEPU. We could not show this, and to keep our jobs we had to be loyal and follow orders. Sometimes we leaked information through our NEPU contacts on plans to arrest NEPU members. The problem we had was there was not many of us who were NEPU, most of the NAPF were loyal to the NA, and the NPC. At this time we were not living in the barracks, we lived amongst the people. This was seen as an advantage; so that we cannot just monitor criminals and maintain order. We were also responsible for collecting information on local NEPU members and passing this on to the NA.<sup>522</sup>

In sum, the NA police were a critical part of everyday policing, in the Province and other parts of the northern region. There were more NAPF officers than there were NPF, and by the 1950s, recruitment from the Province had increased exponentially. Most NAPF recruits were largely posted within their divisions and NAs. The communities they were tasked to police were their own, creating tension for the officers between the community and the NA, particularly when the orders and directives were considered to negate community values and norms. Serving the NA as a police officer did not equate to serving the community; however, the community was served through the choices the officers took in everyday policing decisions.

#### **6.2.4. Profiling the NAPF (Yan Doka)**

In my analysis of the history of institutionalising plural policing from the top, the lens of inquiry was focused on grand processes. Meta narratives of local administrative and policing history – on the national level and the impacts on the former Province, now Plateau State. Profiles of individuals help us incorporate the local and dynamic micro narratives – here the focus is on people, their aspirations, experiences and practices. These men who actually made

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<sup>522</sup> Abubakar Rufai interviewed by Yunus Ibraheem, Jos, 05.12.2014.

up the lower ranks of colonial local policing, how did they see their role and how did they function? They were an essential component of colonial rule; therefore, their voices and experiences are important to record.

The following four profiles are an attempt to illustrate the two categories of men that constituted the NAPF after the institutionalisation of the *Dogarai* system. The *Dogarai* who were transformed to *Yan Doka* are not included here. The two categories profiled here are, firstly, the group of *Yan Doka* recruited from ex-service men,<sup>523</sup> and secondly the *Yan Doka* from the 1950s recruited from Middle School graduates.

### **1. Sarkin Yan Doka (Chief of NAPF) Bako**

*Sarkin Yan Doka* (Chief of NAPF) Bako served for eighteen years in the Mounted Infantry and the Royal West African Frontier Force, attaining the rank of Sergeant. He saw war service in the Cameroons from 1914-1916, was a marksman, and his character on discharge on 15<sup>th</sup> December 1921 was given as 'exemplary'. After his discharge, Bako was employed by the Jos Native Administration, first as Head Warder, and then promoted to the position of *Sarkin Yan Doka*. His age was given as approximately 43.<sup>524</sup> As was the case with Bako, in most of the divisions the position of *Sarkin Yan Doka* (Chief of NAPF) was reserved for ex-Sergeants of the R.W.A.F.F.<sup>525</sup>

### **2. Officer Naiya**

Officer Naiya served for eighteen years in the Royal West African Frontier Force as a Private, and also fought in the First World War in the Cameroons 1914-1916, was a Marksman, and his character on discharge on 1<sup>st</sup> March 1922 was given as 'very good'. As at 1930, Naiya had completed four years active service in the Jos Native Administration Police and was listed as one of the 'Senior Yan Doka'. His age in 1930 is given as approximately 41.<sup>526</sup> Both Bako and Naiya were of Hausa origin. This is not to discount the fact that there were recruits from among the Plateau groups who served during the First World War, but compared to the Hausa recruits this was minimal. A 1912 breakdown of troops of the Northern Nigerian Regiment by

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<sup>523</sup> These profiles are reproduced from a 1930 Plateau province Yan Doka files on training.

<sup>524</sup> Jos Prof 3/1/468 Vol 11 Native Administration Police - Improvement of Efficiency of N.A. Police Force, Plateau Province 1930 -1935.

<sup>525</sup> JosProf 141/1928,N.A Police Force, Recruitment and Training

<sup>526</sup> Jos Prof 3/1/468 Vol 11 Native Administration Police - Improvement of Efficiency of N.A. Police Force, Plateau Province 1930 -1935.

ethnicity shows that out of 2,917; 1,171 were Hausa and an unclassified grouping labelled as ‘pagans’, where the Plateau groups were clustered, had a total of 432 men.<sup>527</sup>

### **3. *Danladi Tanglar Wuyep***

Danladi Tanglar Wuyep was recruited into the Native Authority Police Force in Shendam, the divisional headquarters of the then Lowland Division of Plateau Province, in November 1957. This was after graduating from Middle School in 1955. Tanglar recounts that the then *Sarkin Yan Doka*, Adamu Fanzan, a Youm from neighbouring Garkawa was looking for Middle School graduates to take charge of administrative and investigative tasks at the divisional headquarters.<sup>528</sup> Tanglar served in the Native Authority Police Force at the divisional headquarters in Shendam, from November 1957 to October 1960, when he was transferred to Langtang Native Authority. In October 1969, following the dismantling of the NAPF and having served as a NAPF officer for 12 years, Tanglar was among the NAPF men whose services were transferred to the Nigeria Police Force. He served with the NPF in Langtang for nine years, retiring in 1978.

After training, Tanglar’s first posting was to normal guard duty. He recounts that as a police guard one’s posting was changed weekly. Over a period of six months he was posted to guard, the *Long Gamai’s* (Chief) Palace; the local administration office; the general hospital (then combined hospital); the workshop; and the local airstrip. He was then posted as a revenue and inspection officer. His main task was revenue collection and inspection patrols, which included apprehending unlicensed bicycle and dane gun owners. In 1958, Tanglar was appointed the Shendam NAPF divisional station writer. This entailed working on schedules of duty postings, for guard duty, patrol and special duty. His next posting was to *Bincike* (investigations). His main job was to record statements and then writes the FIR (First Investigation Report), compile a case file and hand them over to the prosecutor. When required he also gave testimony and witness statements in court. Tanglar was then made the prosecutor for the Langtang NAPF in February 1962 and served in this position for three years.

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<sup>527</sup>C.N. Ubah, *Colonial Army and Society in Northern Nigeria*, (Kaduna: Baraka Press and Publishers, 1998), 201.

<sup>528</sup> Danladi Tanglar interviewed by Jimam Lar, 12.01.2015.





**Figure 13:** Researcher with Mr Danladi Tanglar Wuyep, former NAPF Officer, 12.01.2015

When challenged on the reputation that the NAPF had as an oppressive arm of Chiefs and Emirs, Mr Tanglar refers to an interesting episode in 1964 that occurred during the general elections. In the run-up to the 1964 elections there were two main political parties canvassing for support in the Lowland Division of Plateau Province. There was the northern regional government's ruling party, the Northern People's Congress (NPC), and at this time, most of the Chiefs across the region supported this party and were keen to have its candidates elected. Unfortunately for the Chiefs the associations of emerging educated elites across the Province preferred the opposition United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC). In the Yergam / Resettlement NA, the stage was set for a political clash between the *Ponzhi Tarok* Garba Wuyep, supporting the NPC, and the leaders of the Yergam Union, who fielded candidates in alliance with the UMBC. When it became apparent that the UMBC-Yergam Union alliance was making serious inroads, the *Ponzhi Tarok* ordered the arrest of its leaders. This is where Danladi Tanglar appears. Tanglar was directed to arrest one of the Yergam Union's

prominent leaders, Wuyep Zitta, popularly known as ‘Mallam WZ.’ Tanglar, grinning with satisfaction, recounts how he declined to carry out the arrest. “I questioned who issued the warrant, and what was the offence? I requested to know on what basis I should generate the warrant. I asked what particular crime was Mallam W Z accused of committing. When all of these were not forthcoming I simply declined.”<sup>529</sup> Tanglar further disclosed, “During the elections the *Yan Doka* did in some cases obey the orders of Chiefs and Emirs – as is the case with the Nigerian Police today. However, we also engaged in doing police work and had a sense of justice and fair play.”<sup>530</sup> It should be noted that the NPC won this particular election.

#### **4. Alhaji Rufai Abubakar**

The fourth profile considered here is that of Alhaji Rufai Abubakar<sup>531</sup>. After completing his elementary education, he was recruited into the Native Authority Police in 1953 and served with the Jos NAPF, retiring in 1966. Rufai recalls serving two NAPF Chiefs: *Sarkin Yan Doka* Mamman Doso, 1943-1957, and *Sarkin Yan Doka*, Mallam Sallau Udo, 1957-1966. Alhaji Rufai recalls that the process of recruitment at the time he joined the NAPF was based on volunteering, with elementary education required to be eligible. At the time, the recruitment officers looked out for potential recruits with good interpersonal skills, while the tactical and technical skills came with training and improved on the job.

Alhaji Rufai talks about the main challenges of the NAPF when he served. The lack of housing was an acute problem, as at this time the NA police lived among the people and not in barracks. While this helped for information gathering and community policing, Rufai believed that it undermined the effectiveness of the NAPF.<sup>532</sup> Rufai served in different capacities within Jos NA. His first stint was in the minefields as a guard for two years. After this, he was posted to the Native Authority Office, then referred to as *Gidan Taska*, as a guard. In 1957, he was posted to the crimes department. He recalls handling cases that ranged from petty crimes such as pickpockets and theft or stealing in the market, to more grievous offences like burglary and tax evasion. Having served in an urban NA Rufai and his NAPF colleagues came into daily contact and interacted more with the NPF. This is in contrast to

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<sup>529</sup> Danladi Tanglar interviewed by Jimam Lar, 12.01.2015.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid.

<sup>531</sup> Rufai Abubakar Jos, interviewed by Yunus Ibraheem, Jos, 05.12.2014.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

NAPF in more rural NAs who only met NPF when they visit for criminal investigations, or the occasional visit of a NA Police Adviser.<sup>533</sup>

### **6.3. Vigilante Policing Practice (1980-1998)**

In this section, the focus is on analysing how vigilante policing practice unfolded following the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme, from 1986. The Nigerian government believed it was introducing a novel initiative in response to policing challenges; this has been examined in chapter five. On the ground, the traditional rulers and former vigilantes were mostly remobilising. In discussions with individuals who were involved and witnessed this mobilisation, what is revealed is that vigilantism through socialisation influences from the police was further institutionalised. What constituted vigilante policing practice at the time? What was the response of the communities? I examine these issues in this section. To begin with, who were these vigilante group members?

#### **6.3.1 Vigilante Profiles (1980s-1998)**

To capture the context, background and experience of vigilante practice during the SAP era I have selected five profiles. Two from Jos, one each from the Muslim and Christian quarters of the city, and one each from the then Langtang, Pankshin and Shendam Local Government Areas. Biographical profiles of vigilante members allow us to see socialisation processes unfolding; we are able to discern what a vigilante career looks like.

##### **1. *Kador Miri (Dadur, Langtang North LGA)***

Kador Miri became a vigilante member in 1989. He responded to a call for recruitment from the Langtang local government council. At the time, he was unemployed, having previously worked as a security guard in Jos. According to Kador Miri, he and 11 others from his district were selected and informed by the Chief that they had been chosen as vigilante members to providing policing services in the community, and he recounts how uniforms were issued to them. “After we were selected, there was a briefing by the Chief and the Police inspector on what is expected of us. Some retired soldiers in our town trained us in drill and patrolling skills. The local government provided uniforms for us and other equipment required doing the work. We were given torches, whistles, boots, and cow tail whips. Our uniforms were a light shade of black, not like the Police.”<sup>534</sup>

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<sup>533</sup> Ibid.

<sup>534</sup> Kador Miri, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 07.10.2012.



**Figure 14:** Kador Miri, VGN member attached to Reak Police Outpost. Photo taken after interview 07.10.2012.

The vigilante groups established at this time, according to Kador Miri, were based in villages, towns and their immediate communities. Their activities were mainly restricted to night patrols and they were deployed in pairs. Kador Miri describes a standard night patrol:

We start work at 10:00pm, we report at our *Shugaba's* (Boss) house where our office was also located. From there we proceed to patrol, if we come across someone we establish where he/she is coming from and where he/she is going. If we are not satisfied, or if the individual is acting suspiciously, we detain him till morning to continue investigation; if we are convinced we let the person go. There are times that we have caught thieves, with livestock or other stolen items.”<sup>535</sup>

I queried further to establish how Kador and his colleagues verify that such individuals were thieves. He expands on the point of ‘acting suspiciously’ –

“Sometimes we come across someone carrying a goat at night with the mouth of the goat gaged with a piece of cloth. Such a person explains that he does not want to disturb people who may be sleeping, or you meet an individual with a bag of cotton at night, and he claims he wants to arrive at the market very early in the morning. All of this is suspicious behaviour. We also caught a man; his name is Shini, sleeping with his neighbour’s wife in the primary school classroom.”<sup>536</sup>

So what punishment did the vigilante group hand out to proven criminals?

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<sup>535</sup> Ibid.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid. This example demonstrates how VGN members implement both legal and moral codes.

Once we complete interrogation and establish that we have caught a thief or an offender, the severity of the punishment depends on the offence. Usually, if it is a case of theft we would beat the person and then tie him to the pole with a rope, I mean electricity poles. Before the poles, we would tie the person to a tree in front of our office until daybreak. In the morning, the thief would dance in the market square for people to see him, carrying what he stole on his head. If he stole a goat, he has to carry the goat. If he stole a motor bike, he will hang the key on his neck, and if he stole a bag of cotton, he will carry a piece of cotton on his head.<sup>537</sup>

The local government council was supporting the vigilante groups with monthly stipends. This, however, did not last for long. Kador states that they eventually had to continue as volunteers, relying on public goodwill to sustain their activities.

As is the case with other vigilante groups in the 1980s and 1990s, Kador Miri's group had a short lifespan. In this case, the disbandment of the vigilante group was caused by, incessant complains of some parents whose children had been beaten and shamed by the vigilante group. Kador Miri recalls that,

After some time parents of suspects and disgraced offenders were intervening and saying that, we should allow them deal with the matter at home. They will go behind our back and talk to the owners of the stolen property and we will be constrained to allow them settle the issue at home. In some instances, parents would lodge complaints at the Chief's palace; some would protest that we are beating the suspects too much. We got fed up of this and we decided to stop before they disbanded us. We had reliably gathered that there were plans to disband us at this time.<sup>538</sup>

My research visit to Bwarat district in Langtang North LGA in September and October 2012 coincided with the most recent mobilisation of vigilante groups. This time it was mobilisation to join the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN). I witnessed the recruitment process in the neighbourhood, and then at the level of ward head, where some individuals were screened out. The successful names were then taken to the District Head and the final selection was done by the local government Commander of the VGN and Divisional Police Officer, represented by a police officer in charge of patrol. Kador Miri was re-recruited in 2012.

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<sup>537</sup> Ibid.

<sup>538</sup> Ibid.

## 2. *Mallam Idris Aliyu (Shendam LGA)*

The second vigilante profile from the era of structural adjustment is that of Mallam Idris Aliyu, a 64-year-old adviser of the VGN in Shendam LGA who was part of the vigilante group members recruited in the mid-1980s. He gives an account of how he was recruited. “Our vigilante group started following a directive from the *Long Goemai* (Chief). There was a high level of stealing at this time, and the policemen could not deal with the problem.” Aliyu narrates how events unfolded in the late 1980s, where similarly like the case in Langtang the vigilante groups of the Structural Adjustment Programme era were constituted at the instance of the Chief, His Royal Highness the *Long Goemai* of Shendam. “The *Madakin* Shendam and the *Long Goemai* called the attention of retired soldiers and requested them to organise a group of men to help the police. One of these retired soldiers was Corporal Hassan. It was Hassan that recruited me into the vigilante group.”<sup>539</sup> Mallam Aliyu is a tea seller; in local parlance, he is called a *Mai shayi* (Hausa words for teal seller). He has been doing this business for almost 40 years, though he is now retired from vigilante work, Aliyu still sells tea.

Aliyu’s narration of the activities of the vigilante group in Shendam is in striking similarity to Kador Miri’s account of almost the same period in Langtang LGA. I impart this section of my conversation with Mallam Aliyu in the following dialogue:

JL: You have referred to vigilante practice when the late Chief, the father of the current Chief was on the stool, can you relate to us how it began at that time?...and you said you forgot the exact year, can you remember who was [Nigeria’s] President at the time?

IA: Babangida (General Ibrahim Babangida) was ruling.

JL: Do you remember who was governor of Plateau State?

IA: Uhhhhhhmmmm, I think it was the Idoma soldier, from Benue.

JL: Lawrence Onoja?

IA: Yes, Onoja!<sup>540</sup> At this time how it started was that criminals were disturbing us with stealing, the Madaki and the Chief called Garba Hassan he is not alive now he is dead, an ex-soldier and told him to organise and mobilise some youth and train them to support the police in fighting crime in the community. The Chief promised his support. He encouraged us to put effort (sic) and that even if it is his son that

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<sup>539</sup> Idris Aliyu (Mai Shayi), interviewed by Jimam Lar, Shendam, 15.11.2012.

<sup>540</sup> Lawrence Onoja was military governor of Plateau state from 1986 to 1988.

we caught that we should not play with him. We would usually assemble at the District Office at 11:30, and then at sharp 12:00 proceed on patrol. Now if we should catch anybody outside after midnight if the person is merely loitering and not with stolen property, we will arrest him/her - no beating, we will bring him here<sup>541</sup> to sweep and the people should see you and mock you then we would release you to go. However, if we should catch a thief, we would tie him to the pole in front of our office until daybreak, when people have seen him then we tie the rope to his waist. We inform the Chief so that he knows we have caught a thief. Then we place the stolen goods on his (thief's) head, one of our men will hold the rope. At that time, we had a drummer called Gudumwa. Gudumwa will carry his drum, and beat the drum for the thief to be dancing and anybody that has kobo or naira<sup>542</sup> will give us. If we should gather that money then we use it to buy battery and share for everyone. At this time, the government did not give us allowance as they are doing for the current vigilante members.<sup>543</sup>

Mallam Aliyu also reflected on the relationship, between the vigilante and the police at the time. He notes that, "As we were working as vigilante members in a town like Shendam we had to interact with the police on a daily basis. Our relationship was very cordial; they were pleased that we were assisting them to maintain law and order. We also cooperated with the police, when a thief has danced round the town and in the market place, we hand them over to the police for prosecution, especially when it is a serious offence like assault or robbery. If the case is serious, we are sometimes invited to court to serve as witnesses for the police."<sup>544</sup>

### **3. Monday Gokum (Pankshin LGA)**

The third example I have profiled from the SAP era is Monday Gokum, the current Chairman and Commander of the VGN in Pankshin LGA. Monday's vigilante career began in Lafia, present day Nassarawa state<sup>545</sup> capital where he worked as a mason.

I did not start vigilante work in Pankshin. I started in Lafia in 1979, at that time I was working as a mason. There were high cases of criminal activity – particularly robbery. The Emir of Lafia called ward heads and requested them to submit names of individuals to serve as vigilante members to curb the high rates of robbery. Therefore, I was amongst those that were selected. I worked as a vigilante in Lafia for five years. We were taking shifts at the time, so in a week I would be

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<sup>541</sup> 'here' refers to where we were having the interview, this was a square in front of the District Office by the Chief's palace a central location where the vigilantes displayed the criminals they caught.

<sup>542</sup> Nigerian currency.

<sup>543</sup> Idris Aliyu, Interview by Jimam Lar, Shendam, 14.11.2012.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid.

<sup>545</sup> Nassarawa state was formerly part of the colonial Plateau province, and part of Plateau state until October 1996.

on patrol for three to four nights. I continued with my profession, as we were not paid, but occasionally given allowances.<sup>546</sup>

Monday Gokum moved back to Pankshin in 1985, and was residing there when the community-policing mobilisation of the SAP era was taking place. Accordingly, because of his experience in Lafia he was made one of the officials responsible for coordinating the organisation and training of new recruits. He narrates how the process unfolded in 1988.

We had been engaging in vigilante work for several years, just amongst us here in Pankshin but everything changed in 1988. A letter came to the DPO (Divisional Police Officer), to mobilise and select members of communities to support the police as community policing initiative. The letter was taken to the Ngolong Ngas, and he noted that since there are some of us already working as vigilantes we should be given this new responsibility. I became the Chairman; I had to leave my business at this time because I was always receiving duty calls from all quarters of Pankshin town. We worked very hard with the police and we reduced the rate of crime in the town. Unfortunately when they transferred the DPO, the new DPO at that time did not give us continued corporation, and we had to stop. Finally, when the VGN came to Plateau, I again emerged as Chairman and Commander of Pankshin; I was also elected as a state official of the VGN.<sup>547</sup>

Monday Gokum provided substantial information on the ongoing operations of the VGN in Pankshin LGA; I expand on these activities in the next chapter. Regards the SAP era of vigilantism, Gokum equally provided some interesting insight on strategies of patrol, gathering information and evidence that is handed over to the police. Because of his long-standing experience in vigilante practice, Gokum introduced several initiatives when he became Chairman of the vigilante group of Pankshin town in 1988. Two instances will suffice, first when deploying his members for patrol at night Gokum made sure that individuals were not deployed to areas of the town where they lived. For two reasons, first they may catch someone they know and be enticed to let the person go. Secondly, in case of tiredness there could be an inkling or inducement to go home and sleep, thereby abandoning duty.<sup>548</sup> The second strategy relates to how vigilante group members gathered evidence, Gokum introduced the practice of taking photographs of caught suspected thieves with the stolen item. The pictures were then handed over to the police as evidence alongside the

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<sup>546</sup> Monday Gokum, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Pankshin, 10.12.2012.

<sup>547</sup> Ibid.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid.



documented confession of suspects.<sup>549</sup> These practices have continued. I came across several pictures taken by VGN members. In fact, some VGN branches have specifically recruited professional photographers as members, and they are responsible for documenting all photo-evidence of caught suspects.

#### **4. Joseph Zhimmah (Jos North LGA) Plateau State VGN Training Commander**

The fourth profile drawn from the 1980s is that of Joseph Zhimmah, the present Training Commander of the VGN in Plateau State. The 46<sup>550</sup> year old is a theologian by training but a photographer by profession. He has also been working as an evangelist since 2002, and a vigilante member since 1989. Zhimmah recalls that before he joined in the late 70s to early 80s there were vigilante members in his community but he was too young to join at the time. His narrative follows:

When I was still young in the 1970s, Rissau my area was very notorious and then known as *Angwan Barayi*<sup>551</sup> (ward of thieves). This was why the community decided to form a vigilante group to help turn the tide. Fortunately, for the community, things did begin to change and the community was very proud of the vigilante members. This really motivated some of us to join and I joined in 1989.<sup>552</sup>

Having worked as a vigilante member for over two decades, with the occasional interruptions Zhimmah has several accounts of successful investigation and arrest of suspected criminals. The highlight of these accounts was how he arrested his boss the vigilante group Chairman of Rissau community for fuel theft in 1992. He provides additional narratives as follow:

I was made the Deputy Chairman of the Rissau vigilante group in 1990. In December 1992, as you would know when Christmas approaches we experience scarcity of petroleum products. Therefore, at this period in 1992, there were several cases of fuel theft from the Bima filling station (petrol station) and we found it difficult to catch the culprits. In those years we did not patrol on a daily basis, it was on and off. I realised on the nights we go out no fuel theft, however, on the nights we did not go out it occurs. I suspected an insider from amongst the vigilante group was leaking information and working with the thieves. I selected five trusted members and we decided to go out for patrol on one of our off days, and we caught our Chairman with 50 litres of petrol. He begged me to show mercy and let him go,

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<sup>549</sup> Ibid. I also witnessed this practice in other VGN branches across the state, it however seems it first started in Pankshin in the late 1980s. These were mostly pictures of thieves trying to steal on market days (Mondays).

<sup>550</sup> Joseph Zhimmah was 46 as of 2012; I met and interviewed him again in 2015 when he was 49.

<sup>551</sup> Angwa in Hausa means 'quarter of town' – Angwan Barayi translates as 'thieves' quarter'.

<sup>552</sup> Joseph Zhimmah, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 7.11.2012.

but I refused. Our job is very critical he was like a bad egg; if you do not remove bad eggs, it will stink and make all the other eggs bad. We tied him to a pole, because this was our practice at the time and in the morning all, the people saw him and he was disgraced and removed from his post.<sup>553</sup>

Following the removal of the former Chairman in 1992, Zhimmah was made Chairman of the vigilante group in Rissau. In 2008, he was appointed Secretary of the VGN in Jos North LGA, and in 2011 appointed State Training Commander. In his current role, he is in charge of organising state training camps and liaising with the National Executives, and other state training commanders to organise national training camps.<sup>554</sup> In January 2015, Zhimmah was appointed as the VGN representative to the Jos North LGA Security Committee, he serves in this capacity alongside the local government Chairman, and all security agencies operating in the local government.<sup>555</sup>

#### **5. *Mallam Yau Ali Wanzam VGN State Commander, Plateau State***

The last profile of vigilante group members from the 1980s is that of Mallam Yau Ali Wanzam. Yau Ali was one the first initiators of vigilantism in Jos, and became the state Commander of the VGN in Plateau State in 2008. Following a mild stroke in 2010, he was paralysed and could not continue in his position as state commander.<sup>556</sup> The Deputy State Commander Chenvong Vongbut who also doubles as the VGN Commander of Langtang North has been acting as State Commander since 2012. As is the case with vigilante work Mallam Yau Ali's practice was intermittent, that notwithstanding prior to his paralysis and indisposition Mallam Yau Ali's profile provides us with over two decades of experience as a vigilante group member. Before examining this, it is instructive to provide a background to the situations that prevailed in the Hausa neighbourhoods of Jos in the early 1980s and necessitated Mallam Yau Ali and his colleagues to initiate vigilante practice.

Organised vigilantism began amongst the Hausa communities of Gangare and Dilimi in the early 1980s. These are conterminous neighbourhoods in central Jos metropolis where one of the key tin mining centres during British colonial rule was located. The Nigerian Railway terminus built as far back as 1915, linking the railway from Port Harcourt in the southeast to Maiduguri in the north east of Nigeria is also located in this area. This equally lured business

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<sup>553</sup> Ibid.

<sup>554</sup> Ibid.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid, 12.01.2015.

<sup>556</sup> Yau Ali Wanzam, interviewed by Yunus Ibraheem, Jos, 05.11.2012.

interest to the area<sup>557</sup>, it soon emerged as a major commercial hub in the city. Soon the area was littered with shops, roadside vegetable stalls, car spare parts dealers and quite importantly when the state government considered a location to build the famous Jos Main Market<sup>558</sup> a location equidistant to Gangare and Dilimi was selected. The Gangare-Dilimi area essentially emerged as the heart of Jos's entrepreneurial central business district. In 1985, the Jos Ultra-Modern market was commissioned. The market had substantial capacity, 4,290 stalls, parking for 300 cars, 600 trailers, and 200 buses. There were also 44 eating-houses, 2 banks, 1 restaurant, and 1 post office.<sup>559</sup> The status of the area as a major business district also meant that it attracted criminal elements. This resulted in a rise in criminal activity, specifically armed robbery and theft. Evidently, it was therefore in Gangare that the first known organised vigilante group in Jos was established,<sup>560</sup> specifically to combat the rising crime that had accompanied the thriving commercial environment. Yau Ali recounts the process of organising the vigilante group in Gangare:

...this was an era of bandits, burglars, and armed robbers. There were notorious criminals and gang leaders like Mai Adda, and Haruna Badman. These gangs were terrorising our community, and the government at the time did not have enough men to provide the required security for us. We had to do something, so in response, four of us called a meeting at the abattoir, which was then situated near Gangare, and we agreed to form a vigilante group. We became the officials of this group and the people gave us the required support.<sup>561</sup>

It was amidst this criminality that in 1983 Mallam Yau Ali, Mallam Magaji Adamu, Mallam Hassan Dan Hadeja, and Alhaji Inuwa Mahauchi established a vigilante group.<sup>562</sup> They continued with their activities through the late 1980s and the 1990s, and when the Vigilante Group of Nigeria was established and registered as a national organisation in 1999, Mallam Magaji was selected to serve as Chairman and State Commander. After Magaji passed on in 2003, Hassan Garba took over following his appointment by the national headquarters. Mallam Yau Ali emerged as the Plateau State Chairman and State Commander of the VGN after the death of Hassan Garba in 2008.

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<sup>557</sup> Ibid. This point was also made by Alhaji Garba Juji, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos, 04.11.2012.

<sup>558</sup> The Jos Main Market, which was commissioned and opened for business in 1985, was destroyed and burnt down following a fire incident in 2002.

<sup>559</sup> Sati U. Fwatshak, *African Entrepreneurship in Jos, Central Nigeria, 1902-1985*, (Carolina Academic Press, Africa World Series, 2011), 172.

<sup>560</sup> Vigilante practice had already been initiated earlier in the mid-1970s in the more rural local government areas of Langtang, and Shendam. The early 1980s is the earliest for Jos metropolis.

<sup>561</sup> Yau Ali, interviewed by Yunus Ibraheem, Jos, 04.11.2012.

<sup>562</sup> Ibid.

Mallam Yau Ali states that the success of the vigilante group members at the time he was active was largely due to the support they received from state authorities. The police openly recognised the vigilante groups and encouraged joint patrols with police officers, thereby legitimising vigilante practice within the various neighbourhoods they operated. He recalls that:

We started doing this work when Shagari was President, and Solomon Lar was Governor<sup>563</sup> and we continued after the military took over power. The authorities supported us actively, as our objective was to support the police and help in the maintenance of law and order. The local police Divisional Office supported us, for example, when Solomon Awasak was the DPO of C-Division ten (10) police officers were deployed to patrol with our men at night. Following the success of this initiative in Gangare, Awasak also encouraged the introduction of police - vigilante group patrol in other parts of Jos.<sup>564</sup>

I traced and talked with Solomon Awasak in December 2014. Now retired, he runs a private security company based in Jos. He not only confirmed the account by Yau Ali, but also praised the work of Ali and his colleagues in supporting the police to fight crime, specifically robbery. He states that:

...from my experience, I would say at the time, the Hausa community was more organised, and the leaders of the vigilante groups were very strong and respected. It was strictly a local arrangement, community based and it started in Gangare. I was the first DPO in Jos to provide police officers to go on patrol with the vigilante group members, we trailed it and it was quite successful. My other colleagues decided to initiate this cooperation in other parts of the city and environs and we witnessed a drop in crime. We were better informed and our work was more effective. It was a very successful initiative, unfortunately, the local governments could not support the vigilantes with allowances and eventually they got discouraged.<sup>565</sup>

Mallam Ali also recollects the support the vigilante group got from the military governor of Plateau State. He narrates a particular episode, when a newspaper reported that the vigilante group members in Jos had cut the fingers of a robber as penalty, thereby taking the law into their own hands. After reading this report the Military Governor, Samuel Atukum ordered the arrest of the vigilante leaders, and invited the editor of newspaper to his office to confirm the validity of the story before considering what kind of action to take. Ali recalls that:

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<sup>563</sup> The period referred is the Second Republic, October 1979-December 1983.

<sup>564</sup> Yau Ali, interviewed by Yunus Ibraheem, 04.11.2012.

<sup>565</sup> Solomon Awasak, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 16.12.2014.

On this day, I was invited to C-Division police station, on a call from the DPO. I thought it was in relation to some patrol briefing or update on our work with the police. When arrived I saw that my colleagues Hassan and Magaji had also been invited. At C-Division, the DPO joined us in the police van and we went to the office of the Commissioner of Police. The Commissioner informed us that the Military Governor wanted to talk to us; we were confused and anxious, as it was a rare occurrence to be invited by the Governor. On arrival, the Governor confronted us with this report, we denied, as we had never done such a lawless act. We confessed that when we arrest suspects, or catch criminals like thieves and robbers we do flog them before handing over to the police. Cutting fingers was however completely unthinkable. Unknown to us the Governor had also invited the newspaper editor and the individual who we were accused of cutting his fingers. It was eventually established that the story was unfounded. The Governor praised us and encouraged us to sue the newspaper for defamation of our character. We decided not to pursue this, since we had been cleared before the Governor himself there was no need to sue, but we demanded for an apology. The apology was published and I kept a copy of this newspaper, but it was unfortunately burnt during the crisis.<sup>566</sup>

Mallam Ali also recalls that one of their criteria's for eligibility to be recruited was having a job, profession or some business that earned an individual regular income. He recalls that this was one of their yardsticks to measure responsibility.<sup>567</sup> At the peak of their activities in the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, the vigilante group amongst the Hausas of Jos had seventy-seven members.<sup>568</sup>

#### **6.4. Narrations of Vigilante Policing Practice: Voices from the Community**

Interviews with members of the communities reveal the views and opinions of the people whom the vigilante groups served. This demonstrates how expectations and opinions varied amongst different groups in the community. The dominant narrative that emerged attributes the 1980s rise of vigilantism as a response to a spate of crime across the state. According to a group of women I interviewed in Dadur<sup>569</sup>, Langtang North, this was a period when they began to get actively involved in small-scale business and entrepreneurship. They were participating in the local economy as brewers of local beer, opened shops to sell local soup condiments, eateries, producing vegetable oils, etc. They were therefore earning regular returns of income. However, on a small scale this was nonetheless enough to further invest. Such investment would include rearing livestock, goats and sheep. Some of the women

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<sup>566</sup> Yau Ali, interviewed by Yunus Ibraheem, 04.11.2012.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid.

<sup>568</sup> Ibid.

<sup>569</sup> Dadur Women, (random sample) Average age early 60s interviewed by Jimam Lar, 21.10.2012.

though were saving their earnings. They therefore became the target of theft by ‘wayward’ young men. A second reason for the establishing of community vigilante groups according to the women was what they regarded as indiscipline. This as I found out referred to a rise in pre-marital sex amongst teenagers and consequently a rise in cases of pre-marital pregnancies. In communities like Dadur, and Pil-Gani in Langtang North and Shimankar in Shendam LGA, cases of pre-marital sex and pregnancies were greatly frowned upon. In fact, the societal norms and values are such that the blame resides more with the mother of a girl found pregnant, than the girl. As one of the women noted:

Apart from the stealing, there were also high levels of indiscipline by our children. When I was growing up it was not possible that your mother goes to sleep before you, it never happened, unless you were working in the kitchen. At this time, you had boys and girls hanging out on the streets at night, doing all sorts of nasty things, they had no fear for their parents, they did not fear God. Our traditions and culture also did not permit this.<sup>570</sup>

The women further described how the community mandated a retired soldier, and two others mentioned in the interviews as Danburam, Dantata, and Babale to form a vigilante group in Dadur. The vigilante members were locally referred to as ‘*Orim a’danburam*’ Danburam’s Masquerades. The vigilantes are remembered to have been unsympathetic and uncompromising to the offenders that they caught, duly reversing the state of helplessness that had held sway. Again, one of the women recounts how, “Danburam’s masquerades were very effective when they were formed. They caught a number of thieves. I remember, there was the man that stole a goat. He was tied to the tree in front of Danburam’s house (vigilante leader’s house). There were other cases of stolen mattresses, beds, grains, and money that were recovered.”<sup>571</sup>

Describing a similar scourge of robbery in Jos in the early 1980s Alhaji Sabo Kebur, states, “historically *Yanbanga* emerged in Jos in response to theft and armed robbery. The situation in those days was so bad that it got to a point whereby gang of armed robbers had the courage to send notification letters to people to prepare for their arrival at night.”<sup>572</sup> He recalls the gangs had their hideout at the top a rocky hill within the metropolis called ‘*Dutsen Cowboy*’ Cowboy Rock. The rise in crime and violence by youths in the mid-1980s in the Angwan

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<sup>570</sup> Group Interview Dadur Women Association, by Jimam Lar, Dadur, 21.10.2012.

<sup>571</sup> Ibid.

<sup>572</sup> Sabo Kebur, interviewed by Yunus Ibraheem, Jos, 25.09.2012.

Rogo Hausa quarters of Jos, for instance is attributed to the incursion and infiltration of remnants of Maitasine sect members who had fled from Kano because of the governments clamp down on them at the time.<sup>573</sup> Alhaji Kebur commended the *Yanbanga* for arresting the leaders of the then gang Mai Adda, and killing him. This prompted the other gang members to flee.<sup>574</sup>

More evidence of local mobilisation for vigilantism in the early 1980s comes from Shimankar town in Shendam LGA. Shimankar is one of the main towns in Shendam LGA, a major breadbasket in the local government with a very heterogeneous population. In a group interview with current and former vigilante members, we learn how vigilantism began in the area during the second republic<sup>575</sup> – “vigilantism started in Shimankar when Shagari was President and Solomon Lar was Governor. At the time stealing was very rampant and out of control, so the community decided to set up a vigilante group.”<sup>576</sup> Over the last three decades, there were two interregnums, when vigilante policing in the area was suspended. The first was in the mid-1990s, and the second period more recently in 2002. In both cases, the vigilante members attribute it to a lack of motivation and support from local authorities. At times that they were active, the vigilante members had done very well and earned the trust of the community. Community leaders praised the work of the vigilante group in Shimankar. They gave them much credit for the low level of crime, particularly theft in the area.<sup>577</sup> The group has equally had a long-standing cooperation with the police in the town. In fact, I was informed of two periods in 2000 for 4 months and another instance, when the vigilante group temporarily took over the running of the police station in the town.

Another account of vigilante success from the 1980s is a narration laced with humour from Pankshin town, circa 1985. The story had been rendered to me initially by Sunday Philibus a former vigilante member at the time. It was however, retold by a group of community elders in Pankshin. “In the 1980s the vigilante Chairman was the then Ngolong Ngas (Chief) Adamu Gutus<sup>578</sup>, and his Secretary was G.G. Yakzum, the then Principal of Government College Pankshin”<sup>579</sup>, a state boys secondary school in the town. According to Sunday Philibus,

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<sup>573</sup> S. Massalah, interviewed by Yunus Ibraheem, Jos, 24.09.2012.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid.

<sup>575</sup> The Second Republic was from October 1979-December, 1983.

<sup>576</sup> Group Interview, current and former vigilantes Shimankar, by Jimam Lar, 15.11.2012.

<sup>577</sup> Group Interview, Committee of Elders, Shimankar, 15.11.2012.

<sup>578</sup> This is yet another instance of the active involvement of traditional rulers in vigilantism of the 1980s.

<sup>579</sup> Group Interview, Community Elders Pankshin, by Jimam Lar, 10.12.2012.

At the time, we usually have our parade in the grounds of the palace. Some of our members were retired soldiers and they helped to train us and prepare us for patrol. The first person we caught stole a video (VHS Player) from Bala Jatau. Bala Jatau was the first person to bring a video player to Pankshin. We were just patrolling around 2:00am and we saw this individual, we called on him to come and he started to run. We chased him and blew our whistle, he ran into the stream but we pursued him and caught him. We asked him questions, what was he carrying? Where was coming from? He merely said he was sent on an errand, and does not even know what he was carrying. After beating him, he confessed that he stole it but refused to tell us where he stole it. We handed him over to the police, without knowing that the item was a video player. In the morning, Bala Jatau came to report that his video player was stolen. The police called our attention, and Jatau gave us monetary reward.<sup>580</sup>

The community elders praised the work of the vigilante group, and particularly commended the 1980s groups for doing a great job with minimal incentives. They recalled how the vigilantes became an important part of the policing system in the Pankshin Monday market. Because of their patrols around the markets, the vigilantes curbed the activities of pickpockets who were usually circuiting the markets in the local government area.

The Nigeria Police force hierarchy at the Jos headquarters were also weighing in with their commendation. The general tone of the police views in the newspapers was a very positive assessment of the role of the vigilante groups in curbing crime. The police at the time were off course feeling the austerity that was ushered in by the implementation of the Structural Adjustment Programme. In an October 1989 report, carried in the Standard newspapers, the then Police Commissioner Alhaji Laminu Z. Mamadi commended the combined efforts of the police and vigilante groups in fighting crime.<sup>581</sup> In another report, Mamadi called on the Divisional Police Officers (DPOs) in charge of the local governments to seek creative means of working with the vigilante groups, and maximise the potential that the vigilantes offered in crime prevention and maintenance of law and order.<sup>582</sup> In an interview with Solomon Awasak, who served as DPO with the Plateau State police command in the mid-1980s, he recounts some of his experiences with the vigilante groups in Jos at the time:

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<sup>580</sup> Sunday Philibus, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 10.12.2012.

<sup>581</sup> The Nigerian Standard, October 21<sup>st</sup>, 1989.

<sup>582</sup> The Nigerian Standard, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1989.



I served with the Jos, police command from 1979 to 1991. I started with C.I.D general investigation. The period when I was involved with the vigilante groups is from 1986, when I was appointed D.P.O Laranto (a very ethnically mixed quarter in Jos), and later D.P.O A Division (a police area of command covering large parts of Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba quarters of Jos). The vigilante groups at that time were not organised under a single state or local government leader. Every neighbourhood had their own, this made it very difficult for us to coordinate and have a coherent cooperation with them. There were so many vigilante group leaders coming to my office. In spite of this, generally they were very helpful and provided us with information in regards to criminal suspects in the community and local gangs involved in drug abuse, particularly Indian hemp. It was also during this period that we got them uniforms and identity cards, to curb cases of impersonation.<sup>583</sup>

While there were several people who praised the emergence and work of vigilante groups in the 1980s across Plateau State, I also encountered voices that were critical of vigilante practice. At times, the same people who had commended the vigilant groups were also eventually regretting their emergence. Far from being altruistic, and committed community members providing security and helping to maintain law and order, vigilante practice is equally fraught with wrongdoing. As it is wont to be the case with unregulated vigilant practice, they have a high tendency to get out of hand. The data gathered from interviews, but also newspaper reports reveal how the same communities that commended vigilant groups equally condemn them when they embrace and perpetrate criminality.

In a group, interview a women association in Dadur, Langtang North local government area lamented how overtime the vigilantes began to engage in criminality. Two forms of misdemeanour are mentioned. They began demanding for money from small-scale owners of business in the town, and they fined the women. The vigilantes claimed they were keeping the town safe for the women to do business so they expected them to pay for the services rendered. More grievous though was the fact that the vigilantes were violating the very rules they were established to enforce. The women explained that, “the whole vigilante work was undermined when the vigilante were catching themselves with stolen property. They also began to show favouritism. When they arrest a friend or colleague, they would let the person go free. It got out of hand, so the traditional rulers and the police had to stop it at that time.”<sup>584</sup>

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<sup>583</sup> Solomon Awasak, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos, 16.12.2014.

<sup>584</sup> Group Interview Dadur Women Association, by Jimam Lar, 21.10.2012.

However, after sometime when the stealing began again it was reintroduced. “We had really supported them but they unfortunately disappointed us.”<sup>585</sup>

The peak of citizens’ frustration with the excesses of the vigilante groups was in 1989. A reading through the archives of the Plateau State government owned Nigeria Standard newspaper is revealing. I came across several letters of remonstrance, and opinion pieces by Plateau residents from different local governments published in the Standard. A few examples drawn from Shendam, Langtang, and Lafia<sup>586</sup> Local Government Areas, capture the mood and frustrations at the time. On Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup> 1989, an opinion piece was published in the Standard. Authored by the then Deputy Chairman of Lafia local government area, A.M. Liman, the piece was titled ‘The Vigilante and Law Enforcement Agents’. Liman’s core argument was that vigilante group practice had gone out of control and the police were tacitly and to a lesser extent actively supporting groups who have contravened the law, “had no respect for fundamental rights of citizens to dignity and due process of the law.”<sup>587</sup> Liman recounts that his concern on the matter was informed by what he witnessed on one of his daily visits to the vendor he “witnessed a tumultuous crowd in a mixed frenzy of anger and euphoria. The centre of attraction was a young man tied to a pole...having received a thorough beating by the vigilante group.”<sup>588</sup> According to Liman, his feeling of revolt to vigilante practice and police complaisance occurred when he went to the police station to enquire whether the young man had been handed over to the police. He was informed that the vigilantes had not yet finished. They would have to parade him around the town, so that everybody would identify him as a thief. A second instance according to Liman was the “grim and gruesome experience of 5 young men who were suspected to have stolen 10 cows. These people were handed over to the police on 24, December 1988. On the 28<sup>th</sup> December, the suspects were released by the police to the vigilante group, which subjected these people to the most barbaric form of brutality.”<sup>589</sup> On the police, Liman frowns at the passive if not the conspiratorial attitude of the police towards the illegal activities of the vigilante group. Criticizing the police for abdication of responsibility, Liman writes, “Unfortunately the police seemed to tacitly approve this. It is a shameful state of affairs for the police to promote not

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<sup>585</sup> Ibid.

<sup>586</sup> The present headquarters of Nassarawa state, until October 1996 was part of Plateau state.

<sup>587</sup> The Nigeria Standard, January 11, 1989, p.4.

<sup>588</sup> Ibid.

<sup>589</sup> Ibid.

even to condone the activities of a group of men, not recognized under the law to constitute itself into an unofficial police force and court for that matter.”<sup>590</sup>

The complaint from Shendam town was published in the Sunday Standard of 22<sup>nd</sup>, October 1989. In a letter, titled ‘Vigilantes in Shendam’ three residents of the town Abdul-Razaq B. Muhammed, Muhammed Bashir M. Hassan, and Abubakar Usman were concerned about the activities of *Yanbanga* in Shendam. They disapproved how “the Yanbanga (sic) had taken the law into their hands, by brutally harassing and torturing citizens unnecessarily.”<sup>591</sup> The *Yanbanga* they claimed “had resorted to meting out both corporal and psychological punishment on people and this is not stipulated in the law of the land. Since the law enforcement agents exist the vigilantes have no right to torture a mere suspect”<sup>592</sup> They proceeded to give two examples, in order to express the enormity of their concern, I present the examples in full:

We were witnesses to what the so-called vigilantes did to a suspect on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 1989. They mercilessly tied him to an electric pole, rubbed pepper in his eyes, forced him to eat some pepper, and then they severely beat him up causing bodily injuries. They then tied a rope round his waist forcing him to dance from street to street with the suspected stolen item; a bed on his head...Another example happened on the 7<sup>th</sup> of October, 1989 when the vigilantes savagely beat up another mere suspect and forced him to carry a huge bag of guinea corn that was suspected to be stolen. There are many cases of such behaviour; in fact, one of the suspects almost lost his life.<sup>593</sup>

They conclude with an appeal to the rule of law but also admonishing the vigilante groups with religious injunctions on punishment. They state, as follows:

This type of action, apart from being unconstitutional is also not encouraged by any religious denomination worldwide. Though different religious bodies provide punishment for a deviant when proved guilty, none (sic) of the punishments are as brutal and savage as the one inflicted by the vigilantes in Shendam...the proper thing that the Yanbanga should do is to take any arrested suspect to the police.<sup>594</sup>

In contrast to the foregoing views, I also came across opinions that had an alternative take on the vigilante groups. These citizens though critical of vigilante practices, recognised the

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<sup>590</sup> Ibid.

<sup>591</sup> The Nigerian Sunday Standard, October 22, 1989.

<sup>592</sup> Ibid.

<sup>593</sup> Ibid.

<sup>594</sup> Ibid.

usefulness of the groups. Also suggesting how the community and the local government could benefit by introducing initiatives that provided training, regulating and monitoring the vigilante groups. An example of this viewpoint is a letter published in the Standard newspaper of Wednesday, 15, February 1989. Titled ‘So wither the vigilante’ it was featured as an opinion piece, the author Wuyep Nanyah Gaven firstly expressed the unsatisfactory and unacceptable levels of insecurity, particularly referring to high rates of crime in Langtang local government area. He then noted how “the social phenomenon (crime) had led to the gradual loss of confidence and credibility in the state institutions (police), hence, the emergence of the vanguard or vigilante groups.”<sup>595</sup> The author then proceeds to present a counterbalanced assessment of the practices of the vigilante groups. He writes that despite the supposed lack of legal foundations, vigilante groups had contributed to ensuring peace and order in the community. “...in terms of role and control they have of recent operated alongside the police force. In some cases because of the lapses in the police force, vigilantes now operate independently.”<sup>596</sup> Gaven is also critical of the vigilante groups, “the vigilante groups from time to time equally have lapses, and cannot claim immunity, from the law when they display outrageous behaviour and show no humane feelings, and they have on occasion tortured individuals who were later found to be innocent of the charges of robbery...eventually the local government officials banned the vigilante groups.”<sup>597</sup> In spite of this, the author’s conclusion was that the positive role of the vigilantes outweighed the occasional incidence of excesses. “The vigilantes though might have erred in this town, must it be swept off? Must it wither away?”<sup>598</sup>

What does this tell us about vigilante practice prior and after the introduction of austerity? I would suggest two main points come into consideration. First, we see a manifestation of what Kirsch and Gratz<sup>599</sup> have referred to as the conditionality of vertical encompassment by vigilante groups. According to Kirsch and Gratz, vigilante groups substantiate their existence by gradually expanding their range of activities and developing new modes of action.<sup>600</sup> This was the case with the vigilante groups on the Plateau, they began with small-scale neighbourhood night patrols and then graduated to roadblocks and policing local markets.

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<sup>595</sup> The Nigerian Standard, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 1989.

<sup>596</sup> Ibid.

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

<sup>598</sup> Ibid.

<sup>599</sup> See Thomas Kirsch and Tilo Gratz, “Vigilantism, State Ontologies and Encompassment: An Introductory Essay”, in Thomas Kirsch and Tilo Gratz (eds.), *Domesticating Vigilantism in Africa*, (London: James Currey, 2010), 1-25.

<sup>600</sup> Ibid., 18.

This is done to demonstrate effectiveness within the community but also as a means of gaining legitimacy with local state security actors. Therefore, within the bigger picture and framework of the historical process of the institutionalisation of vigilantism and plural policing the period from the late 1970s to the early 1990s is critical and of high importance. This was the period when the government of Nigeria, as represented by the state governments encouraged the formation and support for vigilante groups. Equally critical, is role the police began to play in socialising vigilante groups. The introduction of uniforms and identity cards as I have argued previously in chapter six further gave the vigilante groups legitimacy, and continued the slow process of institutionalisation. Secondly, it is also clear that local officials at the local government level were supportive of the initiatives to establish vigilante groups. The police were also keen, in fact more so following the impacts of austerity to involve the vigilantes in policing, specifically in regards to patrol and arrest of suspects. What was however lacking were initiatives that would have provided adequate preparatory training for the vigilante members, also lacking was continuous regulation of vigilante police practice. The extent to which the vigilante groups were becoming excessive and overbearing after a decade of operations, demonstrates the consequences of a lack of oversight, and regulation.

The origins and creation of security institutions in Nigeria was done with the foundations of instituted violence as a key tool of exercising the act of governing the colony, the post-colonial legacy of military rule has further entrenched this approach in policing. What follows are some instances that illustrate violence as a form of plural policing, these are instances from the NAPF and vigilante policing. The era of decentralised despotism discusses structural violence, as experienced during the colonial period. I then proceed to violence in the era of vigilantism.

### **6.5. The Era of “Decentralised Despotism”**

The different phases changed the form of colonial administration at the local level, but what remained constant was the nature of how the local chiefs administered their chiefdoms, and how they used the Native Authority Police to assert their will. So in the lens of the people in these societies the chosen individuals were not just made paramount chiefs; they were also provided with a tool to oppress and intimidate. To elaborate on this I would precede with the discussion under three sub-headings, taxation and forced labour which the chiefs actioned, but first highlighting the prominent place of corporal punishment as a favoured sentence for the NAs, and NAPF.

### 6.5.1. Corporal Punishment

Corporal punishment (flogging and caning) was constitutive of colonial policing, and a regularly applied punishment for breaking the law. As Toyin Falola, has aptly noted, “nothing represents the permanence of violence in Nigerian political culture better than the police and the army.”<sup>601</sup> Under the NA system the NAPF were responsible for executing the sentence following conviction by the courts, however as I gathered from several interviews of those who experienced NA policing in the 1950s the NAPF were wont to administer corporal punishment, even to suspects prior to arraignment.<sup>602</sup> Archival records<sup>603</sup> reveal transmitted reports of corporal punishments inflicted in the colony, comprising of the Northern and Southern Provinces. For instance, the returns of 1934 for the Northern Provinces were in two categories: corporal punishments inflicted by order of Native Courts and corporal punishments inflicted for Prison offences in Native Administration Prisons. In the records corporal punishment is listed as whipping, for 1934 there were 1,637 offenders, with the total number of strokes at 18,711. Majority of offenders were convicted for stealing 885, their penalty in total for the year was 11,434 strokes. Stealing with violence was a separate category; here there were 39 convictions with a total of 441 strokes. Other highlights include 180 convictions for assault, a total sentencing of 1,976 strokes. This simply illustrates the prevalence of corporal punishment as a penalty for everyday offences like stealing, fraud, extortion, and slander. The colonial authorities were convinced of the expediency of corporal punishment; traditional rulers used corporal punishment or the threat of corporal punishment in literally whipping people in to line. The chief justice of Nigerian as early as 1908 is quoted to have quipped “...the only way to correct black people was to flog them.”<sup>604</sup> The statement captures the mentality and approach of the colonial officials, the preference for corporal punishment as the ideal statutory penalty was there right from the beginning. The peoples of the colony were treated as ‘backward people’ who will only succumb to the threat of whipping, or an actual conviction and administering of the sentence; the most natural means of inflicting pain, a language that all living creatures understand. Corporal punishment continued to be applied as punishment and has remained in Nigeria’s law books. This is discussed in more detail in subsequent sections. I now consider other forms of violent policing during colonial rule.

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<sup>601</sup> Toyin Falola *Colonialism and Violence in Nigeria*, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 178.

<sup>602</sup> Alhaji Ali Dakshang interviewed by Jimam Lar, Dadur, Langtang North, 7.10.2012.

<sup>603</sup> CO583/198/11 Corporal Punishment, 1934.

<sup>604</sup> Times (London), October 12, 1908, 7, quote taken from, Falola (2009) *Colonialism and Violence*, 67.

### 7.5.2. Taxation

Tax or *Gandu*,<sup>605</sup> used in some communities and in other communities they refer to the more conventional Hausa term *Haraji* (poll tax) collection, in the Plateau Province was organised in such a manner that it enabled the active involvement of the various levels of the Native Authority. The village heads, the district heads, and chiefs all partook at various points in the mapping, assessment, collection, and delivery of tax to the relevant colonial authority.<sup>606</sup> There are several accounts of corrupt and fraudulent practices by the chiefs, where the chiefs exploited the people by collecting illegal tax in the name of the colonial state and then embezzling it. Mangwat narrates how the:

Chiefs... and their relatives enjoyed the period of tax assessment and collection, which usually took place from October to December, because it afforded them the opportunity to amass plenty of livestock and grain, which the peasants (people) had to auction in order to obtain cash for the payment of taxes. This was in addition to the outright confiscation of properties by some chiefs, purportedly for entertaining tax officials on tour even when no taxes were due. Indeed...some of these chiefs forced some of their subjects to pay taxes twice a year by refusing to issue receipts to the latter when they had duly paid their taxes in the first instance.<sup>607</sup>

The people also became wary of the chiefs and began to devise strategies to outwit them. An elderly man Ali Dakshang in Dadur town of Langtang North local government area, now in his nineties narrated a case of how he outmanoeuvred the local chief in the 1950s.<sup>608</sup> In one account, the local chief was wont to demand for livestock to entertain visiting colonial officers (Divisional Officers on tour), in such cases, whoever was called upon to provide was expected to oblige. However, the people became suspicious when it was realised that some livestock collected were to later end up in the chiefs' herds. The most fattened of animals that were made ready for the market were sent out to relatives in more remote villages out of the

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<sup>605</sup> Since tax collection was a new administrative practice most of the groups who in any case had not developed centralized political structures had no designated term for it, so the Hausa word *Gandu* was adopted in some communities. It is still used today in some communities to refer to tax. *Gandu* originally referred to a family farming unit, a household production unit with social economic purposes.

<sup>606</sup> Mangwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 43.

<sup>607</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>608</sup> Once the name of the particular chief is mentioned, it is easy to establish the period when the events being recounted occurred.

sight of the chief.<sup>609</sup> The atrocities perpetrated against the people of the Plateau Province by the chiefs during tax collection formed an important dimension of colonial exploitation, but it also engineered fervent resistance, sometimes leading to open riots, with cases of some of these chiefs murdered.<sup>610</sup> The colonial accounts and oral records from this period show how the *Dogarai* and the *Yan Doka*, as the enforcement arm of the chiefs were involved in cases of arbitrary arrests on the orders of the chiefs, there also cases of indefinite custody of persons designated as accused over long periods without trial.<sup>611</sup> The idea that the Native Authority Police Force (NAPF) was largely made up of a ‘stranger’ population – in several chiefdoms brought in from other Northern Provinces – worsened the situation of day-to-day policing.

### 7.5.3. Forced Labour

The chiefs’ reign of terror on their communities also extended to how labour was organised as people were forced to undertake several colonial approved projects. This is rendered clear by the example of road construction to open up and access the interior parts of the Province. There are several instances of road construction across the Province from the 1920s, and the 1950s. The roads constructed were:

...the Jos-Bauchi road, completed in 1922; the Jos-Akwanga road; the Jos-Pankshin-Shendam road, completed 1926; the Bauchi Light Railway, from Zaria to Jos between 1911 and 1914; (in the original account of Ames, this was completed in 1915); and the Panyam-Shendam road constructed from 1953-1958, (right on the eve of independence). These colonial construction projects provided the District Heads with opportunities to demonstrate their newly acquired power by coercing their subjects to the various construction sites...some of these chiefs, the main agents of recruitment, turned the occasion of these construction projects into making personal fortunes by exploiting their subjects and amassing wealth...apart from taking bribes from unwilling subjects so as to avoid reporting at construction

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<sup>609</sup> Alhaji Ali Dakshang interviewed by Jimam Lar, Dadur, Langtang North, 7.10.2012.

<sup>610</sup> Mangwat, A History of Class Formation, 44.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid., 45.



sites, many chiefs embezzled monies meant for payment to their subjects for services rendered.<sup>612</sup>

There was also forced labour for the construction of rest houses<sup>613</sup> for the European colonial officials. All districts had to build and maintain a rest house for the use of the colonial officials, such usage in some instances may be once or twice in a year. “For example, Shendam Division, comprising of seven districts at the time had a total of 24 rest houses maintained with a token of 20 pounds.”<sup>614</sup> The chiefs took advantage of such a system to exploit and oppress their people.

The Native Authorities were also critical in mobilising forced labour for the Jos tin mine fields, the tin on the Plateau became very critical to the British war effort after the loss of the Malaya tin mines to the Japanese in early 1942.<sup>615</sup> Subsequently, the colonial government made efforts to step up production, if tin mining on the Jos Plateau required labour to be stepped up, it would be necessary to introduce a forced-labour policy.<sup>616</sup> This was despite the fact that the colonial regime had passed a Forced Labour Ordinance in 1933 that banned forced labour in Nigeria.<sup>617</sup> The cooperation of the Native Authority was decisive for purposes of rounding up, conscripting, and maintaining labour on the minefields.<sup>618</sup> There were gross abuses in the recruitment process. Freund mentions several of such cases, and I quote two cases from the Plateau as follow. “At Bisischi in 1943, workers claimed that they had been tied up with rope at a groundnut purchase station and sent to the mines. Another group of recruits reported being locked overnight in a UAC canteen at Maidobi and then packed off for the Plateau mines.”<sup>619</sup> Freund shows how the Plateau Province where the minefields were located emerged as a major point for conscripting labour; he states that:

With some exceptions, Plateau labour was considered ‘voluntary’. However, as with the formal conscript totals, the volunteers were actually often the product of strong-arm methods on the part of the Native Authorities. Moreover, mines managers took to bribing chiefs

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<sup>612</sup> Ibid., 42-43.

<sup>613</sup> These are more or less guesthouses for any colonial official on tour or for that matter on any official assignment.

<sup>614</sup> Mangwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 43.

<sup>615</sup> Bill Freund, *Capital and Labour in the Nigerian Tin Mines*, (Essex: Longman Group Ltd, 1981), 137.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid., 137

<sup>617</sup> Ibid., 137.

<sup>618</sup> Ibid., 141

<sup>619</sup> Ibid, p.141.

to augment the labour supply. Emberton<sup>620</sup> commented wryly at the end of 1942 that many a 'pagan' chief was to be seen wearing splendid new outfits on the proceeds of his take in this labour trafficking.<sup>621</sup>

The numbers of forced miners from the Plateau chiefdoms continued to rise, as the war demand increased and the enthusiastic appetite of the chiefs to earn more from the mine managers also increased. By the end of 1943 in addition to 14, 098 enumerated workers from Pankshin and Jos district there was another 11, 000 miners, and another 41, 500 from Shendam and South Pankshin districts, all designated with some 'voluntary' label.<sup>622</sup> When the conscriptions began for an increase in tin mine labour in the Plateau lowlands, the chiefs sold the idea as 'opportunities to go and work for the white man,'<sup>623</sup> hence there was some keenness amongst the 'volunteers'.<sup>624</sup> The workers soon realised the nature of work and the spate of desertion began. It should however be noted that despite the bad conditions and the desertions the pressures of taxation there were always individuals available for recruitment to the mines.<sup>625</sup> The Native Authority Police were thus not just deployed to conscript and escort labourers to the mines, they were also critical in supervising and holding labourers on the mines.<sup>626</sup> The Native Authority Police in the Plateau Province were subsequently adequately rewarded for the services rendered during the peak period of forced labour in the tin mines. In 1947, the Superintendent of Police, Nigeria Police Force in charge of the Province, with the support of the Plateau Resident made a case for increased pay for the men of the Jos Native Authority Police Force.<sup>627</sup> They argued that, unlike the NA police in other Provinces, the NA Police in Jos were responsible for the maintenance of law and order in the tin mines and camps, the securing of mine products, and the security of the mine officials. The request was

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<sup>620</sup> J.J. Emberton was the administrative director for minerals production and the central figure in the forced labour programme.

<sup>621</sup> Freund, *Capital and Labour*, 145.

<sup>622</sup> Ibid., 144. In interviews I conducted in Langtang and Shendam in September 2012, these accounts were recounted when I inquired for memories or stories of the impact of the Jos Plateau tin mining on the Lowlands.

<sup>623</sup> In an interview, Ali Dakshang in his 80s recounts how, in the district and divisional headquarters those who worked for the colonial officers and missionaries as cooks, and messengers were held in a certain level of esteem. The mine conscript actually though this was the nature of working for the white men they were expecting.

<sup>624</sup> Alhaji Ali Dakshang, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Dadur, Langtang North, Plateau state, 07.10.2012

<sup>625</sup> Bibiana Bawa, "The Movement of Tarok into Wase and Shendam Resettlement Scheme: Successes and Failure", in *Mandyeng: Journal of Central Nigeria Studies*, Early Rains, (2011), 73.

<sup>626</sup> Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, 177.

<sup>627</sup> Ibid., 178

granted and the NA police working in the mines found another reason to do their masters bidding.<sup>628</sup>

## 6.6. Violence and Vigilante Policing

### 6.6.1. Understanding Vigilante Interrogation

Drawing from accounts of past interrogation episodes and more recent witnessed acts of interrogation, we can attempt to understand the process of vigilante interrogation. Interrogation in vigilante practice means a plethora of acts, this varies from one town, and village to another. The universal acts would include caning, slaps, threats, and some specific forms of stress positions. From the information gathered, it is clear that most of these practices with some exceptions like flogging first began with the community based vigilante groups of the early 1980s. To illustrate what vigilante interrogation entails I present two instances of stress positions vigilante groups' use in interrogating suspects and coercing confessions. These are drawn from Shimankar, Shendam LGA and Pil-Gani in Langtang North LGA. According to the vigilante members in Shimankar, their interrogation methods of choice are firstly, subjecting the suspect to frog jumping not as a muscle strengthening exercise and pastime rather frog jumping as a pain inducing, humiliating prelude to inquisition. Very popular in Nigerian secondary schools, it entails the holding of ears and jumping while in a squatted position. When done repeatedly the thighs are strained and it does become very painful. The suspect would be subjected to frog jumping until he/she agrees to confess and tell the truth, usually accepting responsibility for stealing. The vigilante members added that, there are instances when the suspect is whipped while frog jumping, this is to increase the pain and expedite confession.<sup>629</sup> The vigilantes in Shimankar also use another stress position technique as an interrogation tool locally referred to as *lilon Mecca*<sup>630</sup> (Mecca Swing). *Lilon Mecca* entails hanging on a pole with the arms tied to the ankles; the pole is situated on two branches of a tree or alternatively supported by two pillars with the suspect hanging on the pole, held up by the arms. The strain and pain is felt on the shoulder joints, and the hollow under the base of the shoulder. The vigilantes recounted that *lilon Mecca* is particularly reserved for stubborn and headstrong suspects. It has been used for interrogation since the 1980s, and is still used by the current vigilante group members in Shimankar.

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<sup>628</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>629</sup> Group Interview, current and former vigilante members, Shimankar, by Jimam Lar, 15.11.2012.

<sup>630</sup> As much as I tried, none of the vigilante members interviewed could explain why the technique was named *lilon Mecca*.

The vigilante group in Pil-Gani, Langtang North talked to me about another technique used in interrogation, aptly named the ‘talk true.’ As the name suggest, this technique is used to get the suspect to tell the truth, or to confess to an offence he/she is believed to have committed. The ‘talk true’ is basically four slim wooden bars about 10 inches in length, held in pairs by four short iron rods, with screws used to tighten the grip of the wooden bars on the offenders lower legs, top of the ankle. During interrogation, a strike on the wood impacts on the bone, the vigilante members continue the process until they induce a confession. With such excruciating pain, it is possible; the vigilante members agree that confessions could be made out of duress. However, they argue that when they subject suspects to such interrogation techniques usually they have already gathered substantial evidence proving culpability. This practice has equally been in use since the vigilante groups of the early 1980s and is still part of the interrogation techniques of current vigilante groups.

#### **6.6.2. The Arenas of Public Shame**

I could not establish where and when the much preferred vigilante punishment of subjecting suspects to the ‘dance of shame’ originated. What is however clear from the data, as demonstrated by the vigilante profiles examined in the forgone section above, it was the penalty of choice adopted by vigilante groups across the state in the 1980s, and is still practiced by rural based vigilante groups. It is my contention that, in subjecting an individual to this dance of shame what we see are specifically crafted stages in a performance that comprises multiple objectives, namely: to punish the offender, to generate income and to gain and sustain social legitimacy.

Sandra Walklate<sup>631</sup> has written about ‘public arenas of shame’ in her analysis of informal crime management in Salford, Greater Manchester, UK in the 1990s. She makes a very apt point about the function of shaming offenders who contravene societal norms and values in public places where the community usually converges for commercial and social exchanges. According to Walklate, such public arenas of shame are usually areas where:

...nearly all the local amenities are located: a supermarket, a chemist, a betting shop, a job shop, a post office, a public house and hardware store. This area provides the physical location and space for ‘public shaming’ ceremonies. In other words, if there is graffiti to be written, and if there is graffiti to be written about a particular person, who it is believed has ‘grassed’<sup>632</sup>, then their name will appear in this location.

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<sup>631</sup> Sandra Walklate, *Informal Crime Management in a Northern British City: Crime Fear and Locality*, in *Informal Criminal Justice*, Dermot Feenan ed., (Dartmouth: Ashgate, 2002), 86.

<sup>632</sup> According to Walklate, grassing was the local colloquial name for snitching. The interesting point being that there were accepted offences of which gang members would not be expected to snitch about others.

It is here that people are named for the rest of the community to see: and since this is the only place where there are any local amenities in this locality, it serves its purpose as a public arena of shame very well.<sup>633</sup>

In the towns and villages of 1980s Plateau State, the public arenas of shame are the local market squares. There are usually designated market days, this range from major hubs of commerce to small village markets where people will converge to socialise while enjoying the local brew. The act is stage managed to not only expose the suspected offender to public ridicule, also important is to demonstrate that the VGN in the area is working. In some towns like Langtang and Shendam local amenities will include a supermarket shop, a local drugs store, bars and eateries, small scale vegetable sellers, a barbers shop, etc. In the major towns like Langtang and Shendam, and the state capital Jos, vigilante members no longer practice the dance of shame. The urban vigilantes have a higher ambition to be seen more like the police; therefore, they have discouraged such practices as they refer to it as “olden day’s vigilante practice.” Amongst the rural vigilante members however, the dance of shame is still part of their practice. It is still constitutive of vigilante practice. In villages as Shimankar in Shendam LGA, Pil-Gani and Dadur in Langtang North LGA the market square is of modest levels and while there is indeed commerce going on, people regularly congregate to socialise and catch up with the latest news. Therefore, the market square becomes the best location to demonstrate that vigilantes are working hard to rid the community of undesirable elements. Furthermore, displaying such offenders also serves the purpose of reminding community members of their responsibility to the vigilante group. This is by showing their appreciation with monetary gifts.

I witnessed such practice on the out skirts of Pil-Gani town in October 2012. The dance of shame is referred to locally as *tabakaka*. The case I witnessed involved two young men, in their early twenties. The local vigilante members caught them with two goats the night before. According to the young men, the goats belonged to their father and had gone missing; they had simply found them and were taking them back home. The vigilante members were not satisfied with the story. They detained the boys until morning and on inquiring from their Dad found as expected that the two had lied. Following further interrogation and flogging the young men confessed to have stolen the goats from a neighbouring village. The ordeal began late afternoon, the young men were stripped of their shirts and given goat-hides to carry on their heads a local drummer with a constant repetitive beat followed them around the village

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<sup>633</sup> Walklate, “Informal Crime Management”...

as they made their way to the market square. Soon a drove of young children mostly under tens congregated around and followed the boys singing and making jest of the now publicly confessed and convicted thieves. It is a remarkable sight, sweaty, fatigued and clearly embarrassed the two young men had to not only dance but also repeatedly sing with the group of children responding in unison. The song sang in Hausa goes somewhat along this line:

Two Young Men: *Alalo Alalo*

Group of Children: *Tabakaka*

TYM: *Alalo Alalo*

GOC: *Tabakaka*

TYM: *Na yi sata*

I have stolen

GOC: *Satan mene?*

What have you stolen?

TYM: *Satan akuya*

I stole a goat

(Sang repeatedly)

After the dance of shame,<sup>634</sup> in this case, the whole episode lasted for 2 hours, the vigilante groups handed over the suspects to the police and returned the goats to the owner. The grateful owner of the goats gave a monetary gift of 2,000 Nigerian Naira (10 euros) to the vigilante group. I witnessed people dropping money into a polythene bag as we made our way round the village and in the market square; however, I was not told how much was raised from the dance of shame. This is just an example of what transpires. Witnessing it one can see how once labelled a suspect an individual loses all rights and claims to dignity. Rather the suspect is an object of scorn, disgrace and embarrassment. Pratten has argued that, shaming through this public performance should be seen against a range of social control mechanisms, in his study of vigilantism amongst the Annang, of southern Nigeria the important mechanisms identified were oath taking and songs.<sup>635</sup> What is at play here in our context is a display of the convergence of the moral and legal community at work. The language used to interrogate, and declare guilt is drawn from the legal penal community. The act of punishing

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<sup>634</sup> For a similar comparative example of the practice, see Pratten, "Singing Thieves", 195.

<sup>635</sup> Ibid.

inculcates the contextual moral community, to be punished is to be disgraced and to be subjected to pain: physical and psychological. The first step in this process is the process of labelling, as a suspect, a qualification to be interrogated and as an offender, a qualification to be punished. Ray Abrahams, in an attempt to explore the role of language and especially rhetoric in different areas of vigilante activity<sup>636</sup> considers the question of the negative implications of the human capacity for classification and labelling.<sup>637</sup> According to Abrahams, when vigilante groups construct moral codes of good and evil, they consequently can easily be led to mistake the label for the labelled. What follows in practice is that these labels once invoked tend to follow in a linear progression, once an individual is designated a suspect; it is a matter of time before he becomes an offender. A label, as Abrahams has argued often has a lethal quality as it can be accompanied by beatings, torturing, and lynching.<sup>638</sup>

### **6.6.3. Corporal Punishment and Vigilante Policing**

The relevance of corporal punishment in vigilante policing is best expressed in the vigilante group's authority to punish. In a sense it performs two functions, first it confirms the vigilante group's capacity and ability to punish the suspect by applying physical pain. The offender is not only exposed and humiliated; he/she is also subjected to physical pain. The recognised capacity to punish further legitimises the vigilante group's authority within society. Secondly, while vigilante members attribute their preference for corporal punishment to the socialisation they received from the police, police extra judicial practice has been understood as 'police vigilantism'. Police vigilantism is when the police (individuals or groups) though being a legally constituted authority mimic the informal solutions of vigilante groups by engaging in extra-judicial action.<sup>639</sup>

Police practice in Nigeria is rife with accounts and cases of brutality and violence, characterised by physical assault, harassment, illegal arrest and detention. There are reports of police excesses during crime control operations, this range from crowd control, demonstration, and protest management to harassment at checkpoints. Police brutality also occurs in form of extra-judicial killings, and summarily executions of suspects.<sup>640</sup> Owen and

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<sup>636</sup> Ray Abrahams, "What's in a Name? Some Thoughts of the Vocabulary of Vigilantism and Related Forms of 'Informal Criminal Justice'" *Informal Criminal Justice*, Dermot Feenan ed., (Dartmouth: Ashgate, 2002), 37.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>640</sup> For statistics and more detail on police brutality and violence in Nigeria see E.E.O. Alemika and I Chukwuma, *Police Community Violence in Nigeria*, (Lagos: Center for Law Enforcement Education, 2000), and Folashade B. Okeshola, "Human Rights Abuse by Nigerian Police in Four Selected States and the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja," *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, 13, no.11, 2013), 242-250.

Cooper-Knock have referred to this phenomenon as ‘police vigilantism’.<sup>641</sup> They specifically offer this explanation as a better way of understanding the phenomenon of extra-judicial corporal and capital punishment by the police. In sum, such police practices can be understood as a response to a critical public demand for vigilante policing. The expediency of punishment that vigilante policing offer appeals to citizens more than the sometimes cumbersome and tardy process of juridical prosecution and trial. This is a useful departure from arguments that situate such practices strictly within discourses of human rights abuse, with little or no effort to understand why the police engage in such practices.

Interestingly, this excessive culture of fierceness and severity in policing practice is also imbibed from police training and orientation, which is deliberately tilted towards the objective of creating policing men that are unruly and hardened. While this approach could find justification in dealing with hardened criminals, it has unfortunately alienated the police from the population it is meant to serve. This is still part of the processes of training and socialising new recruits in the military and the police.<sup>642</sup> Corporal punishment for instance still remains as a legal penal sentence in Nigeria’s law books. Suspected criminals often than not suffer the ordeal of severe beating, and harassment from the police and indeed from vigilante groups. Sometimes this follows arrest and on other occasions as part of interrogation. The Penal Code equally provides for offenders to be sentenced to flogging. A basic scan of contemporary Nigerian newspapers reveals several reports of offenders convicted and sentenced by lower courts to flogging. I conducted such a survey myself in December 2014 while on field research in Nigeria. The main newspaper I used was the *Daily Trust Newspaper*; the sentences ranged from 10 strokes for attempted suicide,<sup>643</sup> another offender got 15 strokes for criminal trespass and theft.<sup>644</sup> In another report, a court in Abuja convicted and sentenced an offender for the joint act of house breaking and theft, to 6 months in prison and 6 strokes of the cane.<sup>645</sup>

This form of violence (corporal punishment) was not however, restricted to “regulative orders” in different manifestations, but within the same logic it has been entrenched in a historical sense and it permeates the society. Violence has been to an extent legitimatised in

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<sup>641</sup>Oilly Owen and Sarah Jane Cooper-Knock, “Between vigilantism and bureaucracy: Improving our understanding of police work in Nigeria and South Africa”, *Theoretical Criminology*, (2014), doi: 10.1177/1362480614557306.

<sup>642</sup> The Police officers I interviewed repeatedly made this point. The point out that such practices are particularly prevalent in the training and orientation of lower rank police officers.

<sup>643</sup>Daily Trust, Abuja, 22.12.2014, 46.

<sup>644</sup> Daily Trust, Abuja, 29.12.2014.

<sup>645</sup> Daily Trust, Abuja, 20.11.2014, 48.



Nigerian society, varied agents of socialisation have ingrained this. For instance, in Plateau State the culture of ‘disciplinarity’ was a key feature of the church and educational institutions. The concept of discipline introduced within the educational system in Nigerian included the celebration of corporal punishment as an important tool of socialisation. This is also articulated in the law books. Article 55 (1) a. of the Penal Code with jurisdiction in Northern Nigeria clearly states that “Nothing is an offence which does not amount to the infliction of grievous hurt upon any person and which is done by a schoolmaster for the purpose of correcting his child or ward such child or ward being under eighteen years of age.”<sup>646</sup> The Criminal Code operative in the southern states of Nigeria equally has a similar provision that accepts violence as a means of socialisation. According to article 295, a blow or other force, not in any case extending to a wound or grievous harm, may be justified for the purpose of correction. The orientation of responsible and good parenthood within the religious context was and still includes corporal punishment as an important form of parental punishment. The Penal Code (North) again article 55, “Nothing is an offence which does not amount to the infliction of grievous hurt upon any person and which is done: by a parent or guardian for the purpose of correcting his child or ward such child or ward being under eighteen years of age.”<sup>647</sup>

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<sup>646</sup> The Penal Code (Northern States), Article 55, (1), a.

<sup>647</sup> Ibid.

## 6.7. Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tracked and analysed everyday policing practice from the lens of the NAPF and vigilante groups. On one hand, this means understanding the practice of the NAPF and vigilante groups as it relates to plural policing during British colonial rule, when the NAPF were active and the period from the late 1970s to the 1990s, which tracks the emergence and acceptance of vigilante groups as part of the policing landscape. We follow how vigilante groups are able to substantiate their existence by gradually expanding their activities and imbibing new modes of practice. On the other hand, this micro narrative focus has equally offered insight into the relationship between the NAPF / vigilante groups and the Nigerian Police Force, again this has been historicised from the lens of the NAPF and the vigilante groups. Personal accounts of NAPF and vigilante group members are presented within the same argument in the same chapter. Furthermore, I have argued that, we should understand the emergence and transformation of vigilantism as a successor practice to the NAPF institution it is vital to point out that the objective of this analysis is not to argue that being a vigilante and being a member of the NAPF is being equated. The two were not the same; while the NAPF was officially recognised from its inception and was paid by the state, vigilante practice took time to institutionalise its practice. It moved from local and ad hoc with irregular payment to its current profile. What is however, explicitly suggested is the narrative that Plateau State moved from an era dominated by the NAPF to an era where vigilante groups are operating side by side with the Nigerian police.

Using profiles of NAPF men and vigilante group members we are able to weave together an intimate history of plural policing. This is in contrast to some existing literature,<sup>648</sup> thus, it is in such ventures that this thesis makes effort of departure from existing literature. If there is a core thrust of this chapter, it is the argument that macro analysis of policing while important in presenting and understanding grand trends ultimately provides a partial and insufficient analysis of what transpired. In our context, as I have argued the institution of policing in Nigeria has gone through different periods and experienced different processes. The composition, its structures and ultimately practice have not remained static. To understand these processes, yes, the macro level is important, but the picture is only complete when we extend the analysis to the micro narrative. Analysis that focuses on macro dynamics, I would suggest are not necessarily wrong, they are simply incomplete. As part of this micro focus, the later parts of the chapter present a discussion of violence as policing practice. This refers to

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<sup>648</sup> See for example Ahire, Imperial Policing...

the everyday use of violence by the NAPF, and by the vigilante groups that succeeded the NAPF. The main point taken from this societal approval of routinised violence is the realisation that the violent practices of policing actors are adopted and imbibed not just from a history of the formation and development of state security institutions, but also influenced by wider Nigerian society. The next chapter focuses on contemporary plural policing practice.

## **Chapter Seven: A Case in the Present: The Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN)**

### **7.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, focus is on the contemporary practice of vigilante policing, and the plurality of policing practice since 2001 is considered. Taking the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) as an important case study, this covers Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999 when the (VGN) was registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). The chapter examines how historical processes have crystalized in contemporary practice. Two levels of practice are considered: First, crystallisation is characterised by official practice at different levels, federal, state, and local government. Secondly, crystallisation and the process of institutionalisation have also been enhanced by the practices of the VGN. The VGN has been active by engaging in policing practice and also situating its activities within a broader law and order policing system, this is through its interactions with local communities, the police and other government officials. These relationships are analysed through the concept of authority, which is deployed to conceptualise the different repertoires that the VGN has used to build legitimacy. I conclude the chapter with profiles of some members of the VGN I encountered during my field research. Apart from detailing what it entails in a comparative sense to be a VGN member, the section also provides ethnographic recollections of three episodes from my observation of VGN patrol.

### **7.2. Institutionalisation of Plural Policing: State Practice**

One of the core arguments I have returned to all through this thesis is the view that plural policing practice (vigilantism) has thrived on the critical role, which the state has played in sanctioning and legitimating non-state actors. In return, vigilante groups have through their practices acted as agents of state power and thus contributed in legitimating the authority of the state. This is inspite of the fact that on occasion, vigilante discourses have seemed to be against the state, their actions however have revealed an unqualified ambition to be part of the state policing system.

In the preceding chapters, I have shown severally how the state has actively midwived the processes of institutionalising plural policing. The rationale behind the colonial state establishing the NAPF amongst the Northern Provinces was to extend the reach and authority of that government. Nigerian governments since the 1980s have in differing guises supported the establishing and practice of vigilante policing. This has continued with the current political dispensation. From 1999 when the country returned to civil rule to the present, we

can designate important governmental policies, declarations and actions that contributed to the legitimization of vigilante policing, also leading to the further institutionalisation of plural policing in general.

### **7.3. The Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN)**

With its headquarters in the city of Kaduna, former capital of the Northern region at independence in 1960 and current capital of Kaduna State, the VGN is the officially recognized umbrella body of vigilante groups. According to the group's national leader Alhaji Ali Sokoto, the group has members and branches in all the 36 states of the federation.<sup>649</sup> Though the VGN was registered in 1999, the origins and history of vigilante groups in Nigeria and Plateau State as I have shown in preceding sections, however dates back further.

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of February 1999, the Vigilante Group of Nigeria was registered with Nigeria's Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC). The importance of this registration was twofold. First, the certificate of registration officially recognised the VGN as a corporate legal entity; prior to this, the group had existed on a fluid basis merely as a Non-Governmental Organisation, with varied levels of operation across the country, particularly in northern Nigeria. The second and perhaps more important factor was strategic, in 1999 Nigeria was on a path of transition to civil rule. Having failed to garner the needed support from the military government, beyond being seen as part of community policing initiatives the VGN leadership thought a government led by civilians may offer a better opportunity. The group's founder and current Commander General, Alhaji Ali Sokoto lays out the history of how the group was established, and I quote him at length:

The VGN was established in September 1993. I will not forget the date because I vividly remember I was in Poland, buying trucks. I was an oil transporter at that time; I travelled to Europe buy oil trucks for my business here in Nigeria. It was the day Babangida left office, and it really made me realise how fluid and unpredictable life is. One moment he was the most powerful person in the country, the next he was gone. I realized if I continue as a contractor I may inherit the world and loose heaven. At a time, I had 35 trucks and supplied oil for African Petroleum. When I returned, I made consultations on what was the most serious challenges society was facing which I could

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<sup>649</sup> It is hard to verify the extent to which this network of vigilantes are organised and structured across the landscape of the country. I can however confirm that for states that I visited mainly Plateau and neighbouring Nassarawa, Kaduna, and Bauchi, there were vigilante groups on the ground that recognised Alhaji Ali Sokoto as the national leader.

help. We realised crime was a major challenge particularly, that and arm robbery. Vigilante groups had been operating, but on a local level. From village, to town across northern Nigeria you could find vigilante groups. I decided to use the funds I had to establish an organisation to bring vigilante groups under one umbrella. That is how we founded the VGN. The early years coincided with a lot of turmoil and challenges, but in the build-up to democratic rule we decided to register the group.<sup>650</sup>



**Figure 15:** Researcher with Alhaji Ali Sokoto Commander General VGN. VGN HQ, Kaduna – 17.12.2012.

Accordingly, registering the group in 1999 was to strategically position the group to be favourably placed to support the Nigerian police as the country was transiting to civil rule. Alhaji Ali captures this point in an interview I conducted in his Kaduna office, the VGN headquarters in 2012:

We hoped that a civilian government would be more disposed to supporting us in our attempt to assist the government in maintaining

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<sup>650</sup> Alhaji Ali Sokoto, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Kaduna, 17.12.2012.

law and order. The government made the right declarations, but unfortunately, things did not work out well.<sup>651</sup>

When I persisted that Alhaji Ali should give me any instances he could recall where the Nigerian government made declarations to support vigilante groups, he insisted that while he could not remember specific instances he recalls that such declarations had been made around 2000 to 2001. My initial research around this question rather than unearth declarations of support led me to the Nigerian government's attempt to proscribe vigilante groups who had been considered to engage in illegal activities that amounted to criminality. This is a reference to groups like the Bakassi Boys<sup>652</sup> of South east Nigeria, the Oodu'a People's Congress (OPC) of the Yoruba heartland of the south west, and the Hisba, Islamic police.<sup>653</sup> In a bill entitled "Prohibition of Certain Associations Act" the federal government of Nigeria at the time, articulated its position on vigilante groups that were actively pursuing goals that not only coalesced with sectarian projects, but also were engaging in recurrent displays of violence meted out on suspected offenders without recourse to legal processes. The bill gave the President the powers to proscribe "any group of persons, associations of individuals or quasi-military groups which in his opinion (the President) is formed for the purposes of furthering the political, religious, ethnic, tribal, cultural or social interest of a group of persons or individuals contrary to the peace, order and good governance of the federation and the provisions of this act."<sup>654</sup> While the literature on these groups has provided varied understandings of why they emerged, and what they represent, some scholars have particularly highlighted how vigilantes contest state legitimacy and how they have rooted their social legitimacy within identity discourses, drawing on ethnic and religious registers.<sup>655</sup> I contend that such descriptions do not shed light on our understanding of the VGN, in view of the fact that the VGN did not necessarily tick these particular boxes – understanding vigilantism within the frames of identity politics, and contestation with the state. As I have severally argued elsewhere in this thesis, the VGN takes us on a different path. Its origins, objectives, and modus operandi of operation are in contrast to the vigilante groups that have received and dominated scholarly attention around vigilantism in Nigeria. The

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<sup>651</sup> Alhaji Ali Sokoto, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Kaduna, 17.12.2012.

<sup>652</sup> The Bakassi Boys were eventually proscribed by the administration of President Olusegun Obasanjo.

<sup>653</sup> The emergence of Hisba followed the introduction of sharia law in some northern states of Nigeria.

<sup>654</sup> Quotation taken from "Nigeria: Vigilante violence in the south and south east", Amnesty International, November 2002, AFR 44/014/2002, 5.

<sup>655</sup> Johannes Harnischfeger, Ethnicity, Religion and the Failure of 'Common Law' in Nigeria, in Thomas G. Kirsch and Tilo Gratz, eds., (James Currey, Suffolk and Rochester, 2010), 51-78.

political environment at the time meant that vigilante practice was criminalised by the state – it also transpired that its appearance in the literature was also not complimentary, except for a few scholars who drew our attention to more nuanced understandings and conclusions.<sup>656</sup>

Having given up on finding any government declaration that supported vigilante groups since the return to civil rule in 1999, though Alhaji Ali was adamant this was the case I was considering going along with the narrative with his interview as my evidence, on reflection I decided I needed more concrete evidence to make the argument. Moreso, for the fact that the Obasanjo government in his first term is remembered more for proscribing vigilante groups rather than supporting them, relying on Alhaji Ali's account would have amounted to threading on thin ice. My prospects however changed when I visited the archives of the Standard Newspapers in Jos Nigeria, in December 2015. Amidst, the dusty confines of old newspapers I came upon an August 2001 newspaper with the headline – “The insecurity question: Presidential security retreat endorses use of vigilante groups.”<sup>657</sup> In October 2001, Nigeria's President Olusegun Obasanjo convened a Presidential retreat on National Security. Amongst other things, the retreat examined factors that were considered to pose a threat to individual and collective security, and outlined actions and measures in response.

The retreat endorsed the use of vigilante groups in the maintenance of law and order as complementary partners to the police. Held two years to the 2003 general elections, there was concern over breaches to security, caused by political thuggery and violent clashes of rival political party support groups. The relevance of this narrative to my arguments in this chapter are summed up in two points. These declarations emerging from a high level governmental panel was received by the VGN leadership as the government's endorsement of its objectives and practices. In the context of this study, this can be seen as another instance of the Nigerian state, having rejected the idea of multi-level policing yet indirectly lending its weight behind the further institutionalisation of plural policing. On a governmental level, such declarations further encouraged state governments to create a quasi-version of state police by further legitimisation of vigilante practice, through the signing into law of bills that recognised

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<sup>656</sup> Fourchard, “A New Name for an Old Practice”, *Africa*, and Ukiwo, “Deus ex machina or Frankenstein Monster?” 39-51.

<sup>657</sup> The Nigerian Standard Newspaper, 13, August 2001.



vigilante groups as statutory institutions of state policing; this was in contrast to the 1999 constitution.<sup>658</sup> Having come to terms with the difficulties of maintaining law and order with a unified, centralised policing system state governors were keen to establish policing institutions of their own. As I previously noted in chapter 4, state governors were chief security officers of their respective states without the tools to maintain law and order. Unavoidably, the return to civil rule meant that the state governors sought to assume a more important political role in security at the state level.

It was therefore no coincidence, that in the period from 2001 to 2002 several state governments passed laws establishing state vigilante groups,<sup>659</sup> a phenomenon that Meagher referred to as a process of hijacking ‘civil society.’<sup>660</sup> Within the same Nigerian polity, the VGN was equally navigating the terrain trying to find its footing and sourcing avenues as pathways to consolidate state and public legitimacy. The VGN was also looking for patrons, they were looking for support. Unfortunately, as they eventually came to realise the VGN as constituted in the early 2000s did not fit into the political class’s logic of the right vigilante group to hijack-using Meagher’s notion. As Alhaji Ali Sokoto recounts the group’s period of frustration as they tried without success to get the support and backing of state governors, he notes:

We realised that most state governors, while accepting the need to be more creative and pragmatic in supporting the police to maintain public order and security actually wanted something different. We had written congratulatory messages to several governors after their swearing in (May 1999). We paid courtesy calls to several traditional rulers to talk to the governors on our behalf; this also failed to yield any breakthrough. After the 2003 elections we realised the governors wanted to organise youths to serve as political thugs, this clearly was not our objective.

The state governors did not see the VGN as the panacea to the challenges they were encountering in regards to state level policing. Considering the options which some of them did turn too, perhaps the VGN was too ‘civil’ and less ‘primordial’ using Ekeh’s logic<sup>661</sup> to be

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<sup>658</sup> The Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, Article 214 (1) on the establishment of the Nigeria Police Force does state that “...subject to the provisions of this section, no other force shall be established for the federation or any part thereof.”

<sup>659</sup> Examples of some of these states, in August 2001 - a bill establishing a vigilante group was tabled to the Edo house of assembly; it was a similar case in Ebonyi state where such a bill was passed by the house of assembly in June 2002.

<sup>660</sup> Meagher, “Hijacking Civil Society”, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 89-115.

<sup>661</sup> Ekeh, “Colonialism and the two publics”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 17.

of any benefit for the governors. The VGN's pitch to the new civilian administration was very comprehensive; they made all effort to convince that they had congregated based on an altruistic agenda. The aims and objectives of the VGN as defined in Article (4) of the Constitution, comprises of the following:

- a. To assist the police and other law enforcement agencies to curb crime;
- b. To protect and preserve public property;
- c. Assist the Police in crowd control and maintenance of peace at public functions where the need arises;
- d. With the clearance of the police, assist public agencies in the protection of their establishment plants and equipment;
- e. To give information to the police and other security agencies of criminals or wanted persons residing in the ward or Local Government;
- f. To locate the permanent or temporary residencies of receivers of stolen properties and 419 (fraud) practitioners for the purposes of enabling the police to arrest or monitor their activities;
- g. To make positive and useful contributions to the advancement, progress and well-being of the community by mobilising and assisting in communal development efforts;
- h. To abide by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and all relevant laws and byelaws.<sup>662</sup>

While the mere stating of rules and regulations in a constitution does not necessarily entail adherence, it is clear that in setting out its objectives the VGN recognised the Nigerian Police Force as the core state institution, without whom aspirations for recognition and institutionalisation would remain unsuccessful. The ideas expressed in the constitution are equally emphasised repeatedly in conversations, but also in meetings and training sessions. In my many conversations with current VGN leadership, at the local government, state, and national level the mantra is to support the police. The VGN's ambition to be part of the policing system is understood within a context that situates the group alongside the police, not above or as replacement, as some scholars have argued.<sup>663</sup>

The police have reciprocated this approach. The Nigerian Police Force has initiated several means of supporting the VGN at the local and national levels. With the approval and close

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<sup>662</sup> Constitution of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria, National Headquarters, Tudun-Wada, Kaduna (Revised Edition), p.1.

<sup>663</sup> For more on this viewpoint see Baker, Multi-Choice Policing...

supervision of the Nigerian Police Force varied local and international NGOs, and private security companies have organised training camps and workshops for VGN members. While some of these NGOs and local PSCs, use these programmes as means of extending their economic base there are others who do add value and improve the competence of vigilante members, in sum this is an attempt to further perfect the operational competence of VGN members. How this works, is by selecting members from all states of the federation who converge in Abuja, the national capital for a few days, to be trained by police officers and other experts drawn from other security agencies. A few examples of such programmes will illustrate the point. In October 2013, the VGN national headquarters organised the first of such seminars, the National Awareness Security Seminar. The seminar was themed around the title: The Roles, Participation and Relevance of Vigilante as a Tool to Other Security Agencies in the Sustenance of Nigeria Security System. The content of the seminar papers focused around the role and use of vigilante groups to supporting state security agencies, with speakers drawn from the police, the army, the immigration service and the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency. The Commander General of the VGN, Ali Sokoto was confidently sure that the success of the first seminar his leadership organised opened the doors for state security agencies, and expert NGOs to support the VGN.<sup>664</sup> This support created avenues for organising training camps, security retreats, and seminars on the importance of community policing at the national level, but also at the zonal levels and the states. In Plateau State, the state government through the state legislative assembly passed bills, which were signed into law supporting cooperation between state and non-state security agencies. These state practices have gone a long way in not just legitimising the VGN, but also has improved vigilante policing practice.

### **7.3.1. The Vigilante Group of Nigeria in Plateau State**

Since the return to civilian rule in 1999, the intensity and virulence of the conflict on the Nigerian landscape have regularly punctuated attempts to promote peace and engender democracy and the rule of law. Plateau State represents one of the most volatile of these theatres of violent conflict. Since September 2001, Jos North and other local government areas have witnessed incessant episodes of sectarian violence. Several thousands of people were killed in communal violence in Plateau State (not just in Jos city but this includes casualties of violence in other conflict theatres of Plateau State, particularly in the southern senatorial zone) in the period 2001-2011. While there is much controversy and contestation over the ownership of Jos, discourses on where the blame lies for the several episodes of

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<sup>664</sup> Alhaji Ali Sokoto, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Tudun-Wada, Kaduna, 17.12.2012.

violence is a major topic of debate. What is however clear is that vigilante groups have been very active in perpetuating collective violence. Before discussing the role of vigilante members and collective violence first a background of contemporary vigilantism in the state.

In the 17 local government areas of Plateau State, there are vigilante groups operating with clear hierarchical structures, drawn from and recognized by the communities they serve. These groups are local branches of a national organization, the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN). The VGN in Plateau State is led by Alh. Yau Rikkos, as he has been indisposed the Zonal Coordinator Alh. Juji acted in his place for a period. The current Acting State Commander is Nuhu Vongbut, the Chairman VGN Langtang North LGA. Both Alhaji Rikkos and Alhaji Juji are Hausa, and Muslims. The fact that the VGN in Plateau State is led by Hausa-Muslims, given the recent sectarian violence in the state with reoccurring episodes in Jos metropolis is significant and I will return to this subsequently. Firstly, though, a historical process accounts for the fact that Hausa-Muslims, a minority in Plateau State are prominently placed in the leadership of the VGN, this is in regards to the emergence of vigilante groups in the state before the establishment and official registration of the VGN.

Based on available data gathered from my research it is plausible to suggest that organised vigilantism in Plateau State began amongst the Hausa of Jos, in Gangare and Dilimi In the early 1980s. These are conterminous neighbourhoods in central Jos metropolis where one of the key tin mining centres during British colonial rule was located. The Nigerian Railway terminus built as far back as 1915, linking the railway from Port Harcourt in the southeast to Maiduguri in the north east of Nigeria is also located in this area. This equally lured business interest to the area, as it soon emerged as a major commercial hub in the soon burgeoning cosmopolitan city. Soon the area was littered with shops, roadside vegetable stalls, car spare parts dealers and quite importantly when the state government considered a location to build the famous Jos Main Market<sup>665</sup> a location equidistant to Gangare and Dilimi was selected. The Gangare Dilimi area essentially emerged as the heart of Jos's central business district. The status of the area as a major business district also meant that it attracted criminal elements. This resulted in a rise in criminal activity, specifically armed robbery and theft. Evidently, it was therefore in Gangare that the first known organised vigilante group on the Plateau was

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<sup>665</sup> The Jos Main Market, which was commissioned and opened for business in 1985, was destroyed and burnt down following a fire incident in 2002.

established in 1983,<sup>666</sup> specifically to combat the rising crime that had accompanied the thriving commercial environment. Yau Rikkos the current state chairman of the VGN in an interview recounts the process of organising the vigilante group in Gangare:

...this was an era of bandits, burglars, and armed robbers. There were notorious criminals and gang leaders like Mai Adda, and Haruna Badman. These gangs were terrorising our community, and the government at the time did not have enough men to provide the required security for us. We had to do something, so in response, four of us called a meeting at the abattoir, which was then situated near Gangare, and we agreed to form a vigilante group. We became the officials of this group and the people gave us the required support.

It was amidst this criminality that in 1983 Alhaji Yau and Mallam Magaji Adamu, Mallam Hassan Dan Hadeja, and Alhaji Inuwa Mahauchi established a vigilante group. The first leader of the community vigilante group was Magaji Adamu. The community vigilante group continued with their activities through the late 1980s and the 1990s, and when the Vigilante Group of Nigeria was established and registered as a national organisation in 1999, Mallam Magaji was selected to serve as Chairman and state Commandant, Plateau State. After Magaji passed on in 2003, Hassan Garba took over following his appointment by the national headquarters. Alhaji Yau emerged as the Plateau State chairman after the death of Hassan Garba in November 2008. The organisational chart of the VGN, Plateau State branch largely mimics the command structure of the NPF state command. The group is led by a state chairman/ commander. A state executive council and commanders at the local government level assist him.

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<sup>666</sup> By organised vigilantism, I refer to the practice of vigilantism that began to gain prestige and also had a structure, with hierarchy and instituted collaboration with the police. As I have argued previously there were already vigilante groups organising in rural plateau state in the 1970s.

# PLATEAU STATE

**Legend**

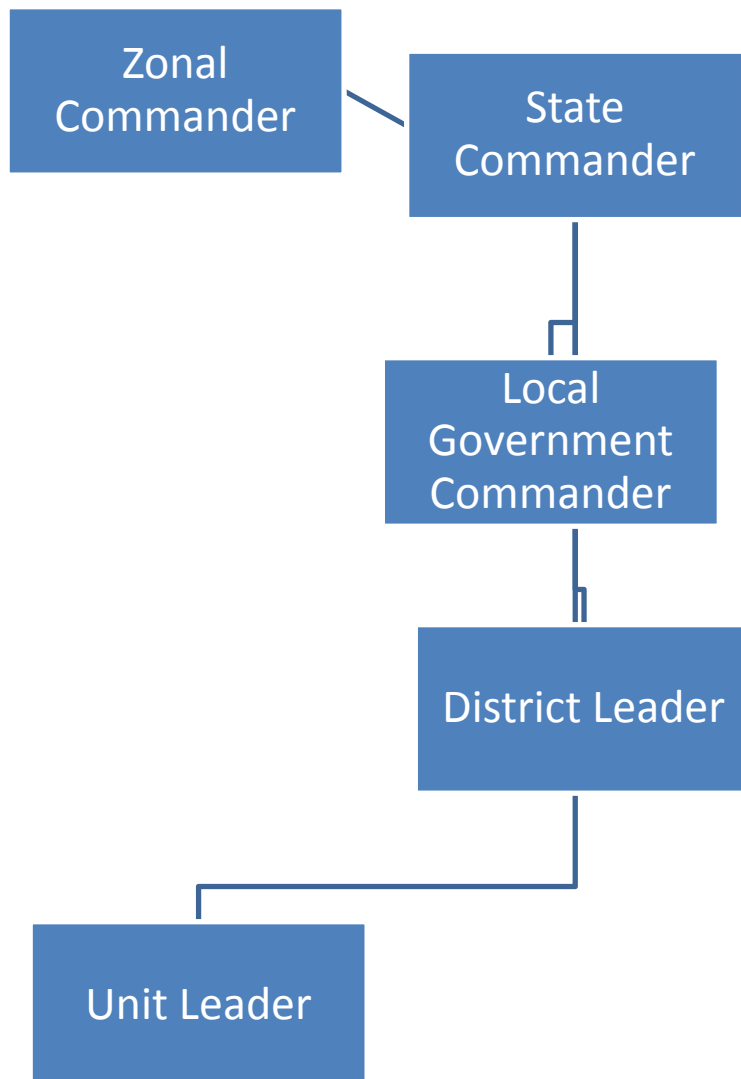
STATE CAPITAL	Bokkos LGA	Kanke LGA	Pankshin LGA
Villages	Jos East LGA	Langtang North LGA	Qu'an Pan LGA
LGA Head Quater	Jos North LGA	Langtang South LGA	Riyom LGA
Barkin Ladi LGA	Jos South LGA	Mangu LGA	Shendam LGA
Bassa LGA	Kanam LGA	Mikang LGA	Wase LGA

1:1,250,000

Kilometers

Source: Office of the Surveyor General of the Federation, Abuja, Nigeria.  
Cartographic work by Joshua B. Dusu.

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**Figure 17:** Leadership Organisational Chart of the Plateau State VGN from the state commander to the unit leader, usually in charge of a village in rural areas or a neighbourhood in urban areas like Jos.

### 7.3.2. VGN Recruitment

The transformation of the recruitment processes constitutes a major means by which the VGN has seemed to not only gain the recognition of the state government and its agencies but also gain social legitimacy. While conducting field research amongst the vigilant groups some specific repertoires demonstrate how vigilante groups seek to exercise authority and build legitimacy. The recruitment process in particular has been made officious and formal; the process can be divided into three main stages: the application form of membership; vetting by the local chief (usually ward head); and interview by the local police and final selection. For the successful few, uniforms are procured; identity cards are issued and rudimentary

paramilitary training given. As part of a national association, vigilante members in the current typology are keen to be identified as extensions of state institutions. Primarily an individual has to volunteer. In this regard, vigilantism in this study still maintains one of the classical traits of the early 1980s. From my discussions with current VGN members, different factors and influences inform their decision to volunteer. There is always the response of being desirous to help and assist the community. As Monday Joshua, P.R.O VGN Pankshin L.G.A noted, when I inquired for his motivation to join. “The main motivation is a desire to eradicate crime in Pankshin, this is why I joined. We are volunteers, whether we get financial incentive from the local government or not, we do this job with pleasure.”<sup>667</sup> There are some members of the VGN who had attempted to join the army, the police or state paramilitary agencies and did not succeed. The VGN then for such individuals becomes an option to still have a carrier in a uniform profession, again the allure of the uniform as a symbol of authority comes through very convincingly.

How then we should understand this, what is it then that really motivates individuals. I contend that, yes we should not ignore the responses from VGN members that attribute motivation to a desire to serve one’s community, whatever eventual benefit that comes with membership there is no guarantee at the point of application that such benefits will indeed be realisable. In making a decision to join the VGN, risk taking is involved. In the context of these societies, what clearly emerges is volunteerism that emerges from embedded logics of young men performing the duty of protecting and securing the community from criminals. Often when I pushed the VGN members further to elaborate on why they joined, they retort wittingly expecting me to understand that as young men it is their responsibility to protect, guard and secure the community – usually the response would be along the lines of “if we do not do it, who will do it for us. Are you expecting men from another community to come over and secure our community for us?” At the heart of the motivation are practices that Pratten, has separately described as “constitutive of inclusive boundary mechanisms...of masculine identity”<sup>668</sup> and as “a marker of youth and the basis of local citizenship.”<sup>669</sup>

Again drawing from my conceptualisation of processes of socialisation<sup>670</sup>, forms and logics of masculinity are replete in vigilante practices, indeed vigilante recruitment for long periods

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<sup>667</sup> Monday Joshua, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 08.01.2015.

<sup>668</sup> Pratten, “Bodies of Power”, 119-120.

<sup>669</sup> Pratten, “Singing Thieves”, 188.

<sup>670</sup> See conceptual framework and analysis of vigilante socialisation in chapter six.



was the sole privilege of young men, and as I have shown subsequently only changed because of the desire to imitate the police and other state security agencies who recruit both men and women.

Within a context of contested citizenship, a Nigerian problem with Plateau State being one of the more violent theatres as manifest by the explosion of sectarian tensions in the last few decades. The logic concealed in the desire of one regarded as a 'non-indigene' is explained in the idea of being a member of young men who defend, secure, protect the community is clearly an entry point to local citizenship. To this logic, I would consider and refer to the strategies of the Igbo and Hausa VGN members of Shendam, who in joining the VGN benefit from the inclusive rights and privileges that comes with the responsibility to secure the community. Another motivation that drives the individuals who seek the membership of the VGN that is not explicitly discussed in conversations but is clearly observed from vigilante practices is the simple factor of seeing VGN membership as a means of livelihood. There is strong political economy logic to vigilante practice; the evidence of this argument is discussed further on in selected episodes I have presented from my experiences on night patrols with the VGN members in Langtang, and Shendam.

Joseph Zhiman, the state training commandant of the VGN Plateau State in an interview in January 2015, categorised VGN members in Plateau State into categories of registered and non-registered. The registered members are those who have filled the application form, with their guarantors having vetted that they are of good character and law-abiding citizens, and have gone through other procedures of recruitment.<sup>671</sup> Zhiman claims that according to their records there are 10,000 registered VGN members in Plateau State. While he has no figures for the unregistered members, he believes it is more than 10,000. When individuals volunteer to join the VGN, membership is not automatic, actually the process of membership starts by procuring the VGN membership application form.<sup>672</sup> The procurement of a membership form as part of the process of applying for membership is a development that is unique to the VGN. Previously, once an individual volunteered if he had no known record of criminality within the community, membership was almost automatic. The application form and other rigours of the application process were introduced by the VGN leadership as another means of demonstrating the officious nature of the VGN as an organisation. In this regards, there are

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<sup>671</sup> Joseph Zhiman, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos, 12.01.2015.

<sup>672</sup> For copies of the VGN membership application form, please see Appendix.

specific criteria's of eligibility. According to the article (5) of the VGN Constitution, membership shall be open to all Nigerians who:

- a. Are not less than 18 years of age;
- b. Are of unquestionable character;
- c. Are physically and mentally fit;
- d. Reside in the community where they work;
- e. Have not been convicted of any criminal offence; and
- f. Have pledged to abide by the rules and regulations of the organisation and the laws of Nigeria.<sup>673</sup>

Additionally, there is an existing principle in the VGN that potential members should be gainfully employed, the understanding being that the VGN is seen as a voluntary organisation. Procurement of the application form is an integral part of the process of employment/recruitment to join the military, police or para-military service in Nigeria. In adopting this procedure, the VGN demonstrates the legitimacy they have as a part of the policing system. The VGN membership application form is in four parts. Page 1 is the main form with the applicants personal details, and photograph, there are copies of the form with Hausa translation for those who are non-literate in English. The information required on the form includes, amongst other things the applicants personal details: name, birth date, local government of origin, district, and full address. Also required for an application to be considered are three guarantors that can vouch for the good character of the applicant. It is required that two of the guarantors should be the village and ward heads of the applicant. The second form requires other data on the applicant like height, colour of eyes, colour of hair, and fingerprints. It reads like a reproduction of an official secret service recruitment form, what the VGN what but excessively over doing the logic. The third form in the application format is titled 'members nominal roll' again earlier questions of name, address, sex, age, height but additional required information, included marital status, blood group, and genotype. The fourth and last form is a declaration, more or less an oath of office. This is the final step to membership; following the declaration, the applicant signs the form to become a VGN member. Before the declaration is signed and membership of the VGN is confirmed there, are stages between procuring the form and become a member.

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<sup>673</sup> Constitution of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria, National Headquarters, Tudun-Wada, Kaduna (Revised Edition), p.2.

In an interview with Monday Gokum the VGN commander, Pankshin LGA I tried to establish how the VGN recruiters ensure that they do not recruit individuals who have a history of misdemeanour into the group. According to Gokum:

We have over the years refined and made our recruitment process better than it was before. Here in Pankshin, we do not just recruit like that. Before we recruit, we must go to the district heads. They can provide the best reference point on members of their community. They know the people who are best suited for our work, and they know those who have committed crimes in the community. The ward and district heads know they will also be held responsible if it emerges that one of those they vetted has a criminal record, so they support the process with high levels of seriousness.<sup>674</sup>

On his part Ibrahim Choji Dusu, the Mai-Angwan (Ward Head) of Chwelyap – one of the formerly mixed quarters of Jos, describes the recruitment process for VGN members in his area.

Formerly, I have to say that the practice of vigilante groups was not organised, it was just any young person that volunteered was accepted. For us as a community things changed after the 2001 crisis, which had a serious impact on my community. As you would know, the incident that ignited the violence occurred in my neighbourhood. We had to screen individuals, it was not enough to volunteer, and we had to check their backgrounds. There was another round of screening by a committee led by the DPO (head of police) of Nassarawa Division. After this, those selected are given uniforms and identity cards of the group. In the evening before they proceed on patrol they must first report to the police station, on occasions, they go on patrol with the police, but normally they go on their own.<sup>675</sup>

Muhammed Lawal Isiaku,<sup>676</sup> a VGN member, Shendam LGA recounts his recruitment to me in the following dialogue:

JL: How were you selected? How did you join the VGN?

MLI: Forms were given to ward heads to select the most suitable individuals who they believe can do the job. It is our area head that selected us; he referred us to the district head. We submitted our forms with passport size photographs. A date was fixed and we attended interview at the Police station.

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<sup>674</sup> Monday Gokum, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Pankshin, 10.12.2012.

<sup>675</sup> Ibrahim Choji Dusu, interview by Jimam Lar, Jos, 18.10.2012.

<sup>676</sup> Mohammed Lawal Isiaku, interview by Jimam Lar, Shendam, 10.11.2012.

JL: You were all interviewed.

MLI: Yes in the presence of the DPO (Divisional Police Officer). They wanted to make sure that there was no criminal or ex-convict amongst us. After the interview we went to the SSS office, there we were issued with a form of introduction we filled the form, attached passport size photographs again and submitted it. The last stage was a meeting at the local government inter-faith office. They gave us talks on inter-religious coexistence, and the benefits of working together with each other.

The police led committee mentioned in the interviews is a critical stage in the process of recruitment. Police involvement speaks to the logic of plurality deployed throughout this thesis; it also demonstrates another strand of authority. What comes across is an understanding by the VGN that as it seeks to cultivate varied means and processes by which the group seeks to further deepen its institutionalisation and recognition as part of the policing system, then subordination and acceptance of police hierarchy and practices is a constitutive part of this process. I sat in such a screening meeting during my fieldwork in late 2012. This was to screen potential new members to be recruited to join the VGN in Dadur, Langtang North LGA. This particular committee constituted of a representative of the Divisional Police Officer in charge of the area, representatives of the community (a traditional ruler and youth leader), and the local VGN Commander. To get things started the VGN Commander welcomed all present and addressed the applicants who had been nominated from different villages and wards of the district, encouraging the applicants to be truthful and forthright in all their engagements with the committee, and wished them luck. The traditional ruler and youth leader also took turns to address the potential VGN members. Interview questions largely focused on the applicant's motivation to join, the VGN commander and the representative of the police severally created possible crime scenarios and inquired how the applicant would deal with such. It was a fascinating experience to witness these interviews, the officiousness, and the wholehearted commitment of the interviewers and the interviewees again clearly lends to the argument of multiple authorities regulating the local component of a plural policing system. Police interaction with the VGN goes further and beyond recruitment processes. It also manifest in policing practices, the next section of the chapter examines some of the methods and manners where these interactions manifest.

## 7.4. Representing the Community, Acting for the State: Police, Vigilante Interaction

Different forms of interaction define police and VGN interrelations. My approach throughout this thesis while studying ‘non-state policing actors’ has been not to neglect state actors. Of particular importance for understanding policing within the spatial and historical context studied has been understanding the interface between what we designate as ‘state’ and ‘non-state’ policing actors. One of my key contentions is therefore not to designate the two as *de jure* and *de facto* but rather to show the different forms of engagement and interaction. As Bellagamba and Klute<sup>677</sup> remind us that the state has not rolled back, but is rather engaged in negotiated interactions for supremacy and authority with other actors. In other words the state and non-state should not be seen as opposing poles, rather what I show in this section is that they constitute two poles of a continuum of practice. In regards to linking the forgone analysis to the micro level plurality, my main point is a departure from arguments where vigilante groups are shown to reject the politico-legal authority of the state.<sup>678</sup> For instance Harnischfeger has argued that Nigeria’s return to civil rule in 1999 rather than “unite the people had actually set ethnic and religious groups against each other.”<sup>679</sup> Furthermore, what was in contention as seen from the lens of these groups and organisations was “the right of ethnic or religious communities to control their territory and resources, to live according to their own ideas of law and justice, and to be free from the ‘internal colonialism’ of other ethnic groups.”<sup>680</sup> Harnischfeger proceeds to conclude, “with the transition to democracy, under which citizens could express their loyalties more openly, it became obvious that central control was widely resented. As many Nigerians no longer aspire to live under common laws, the project of nation-building has come to an end.”<sup>681</sup> This statement is as extreme, as it is inaccurate, transitional periods are often times of uncertainty and could be explosive and present fervent expressions coalesced around social groupings. Our task is however to interpret this with caution rather than making sweeping statements that have no grounding in the historical nuances of the phenomena we study and the context of which they exist. Again, this demonstrates quite clearly the folly of capturing a temporal manifestation and using same

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<sup>677</sup>Alice Bellagamba and Georg Klute “Tracing Emergent Powers in Africa-Introduction” in *Beside the State: Emergent Powers in Contemporary Africa*, Alice Bellagamba and Georg Klute, eds., (Cologne: Rudiger Koppe, 2008), 7-21.

<sup>678</sup> Harnischfeger, “Ethnicity, Religion and the Failure”, 51-78.

<sup>679</sup> *Ibid.*, 51.

<sup>680</sup> *Ibid.*

to conclusively declare the end of the project of nation building. Some transitions take long to take shape; this is where the historical study yields invaluable insights.

#### **7.4.1. NPF and VGN Cooperation**

There are broadly two categories of vigilante cooperation with the police: those who are embedded in the police stations subordinate to the police and those who work independently but in close cooperation with the police. In current practice, we observed the adoption and use of two legal codes: a statutory code based on vigilante groups understanding of state policing; and vigilante codes drawn from historical practices.

Interestingly, as I have referred previously, the NPF as it has been argued also engage in what Owen and Cooper-Knock<sup>682</sup> have referred to as ‘vigilante policing’. This is a departure from definitions that regard vigilantes solely as ‘non-state actors’.<sup>683</sup> Vigilante policing as understood by Owen and Cooper-Knock suggests that the Police can behave in ways that mimic non-state actors who are termed as ‘vigilantes’. This again, is informed by the argument that police violence is a misnomer; as such, it is described as vigilante violence – when police as group or individuals act like vigilantes. As I have shown across this thesis, but particularly in chapter seven such violence should be seen as constitutive of policing practice. This violence exists to keep the normal run of affairs. This is not a debate of the rights and wrongs of such violence; the objective is to understand it for what it is, and further to explain how it functions. Herein lies the complexity, the police perpetrate violence as part of policing practice but they are also the authority that regulates it. In other words, the police endeavour to ensure that violence is controlled and as much as possible remains within the domain of policing.

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<sup>681</sup> Ibid.

<sup>682</sup> Owen, and Cooper-Knock, “Between vigilantism and bureaucracy” *Theoretical Criminology*, 11-12.

<sup>683</sup> Johnston, “What is Vigilantism?” *British Journal of Criminology*, 220-223.



**Figure 18:** ASP. Dung, (in blue and black) NPF Patrol and Guard Officer (P&G) Langtang North, next to ASP. Dung is Mr Nuhu Vongbut, VGN Commander, Langtang North LGA.<sup>684</sup> 10.01.2015.

In an interview with the Patrol and Guard Officer (P&G) in charge of Langtang North, there is a tacit acceptance that violence has a place in everyday policing practice. The P&G's daily chore is posting police officers on patrol beats and guarding post across the town. He also goes round inspecting and supervising, and attends to emergencies that may arise. The important point relevant here is his admittance of violence, which he describes as the "occasional necessity of ill treatment to bring out the truth", in his own words:

We made the VGN to understand how our work and theirs is very similar, and for them to appreciate the importance of professionalism. They have been working very well, in fact, we are indeed satisfied, the local government officials and the ward heads are also satisfied with the support and work of the VGN. The VGN have also learned how to deal with difficult situations, while we do not support torture and excessive violence – we understand when they have to use occasional

<sup>684</sup> The event is the weekly 'lecture', every Saturday morning VGN unit leaders converge in Langtang, the local government headquarters to give updates on their activities and to receive any important information.

ill treatment to bring out the truth. This can be tolerated because it helps to catch criminals and prevents criminality. We are always giving the VGN men lectures and closely supervising them.<sup>685</sup>

The police as I understood their logic have minimal problems as long as vigilante groups operate within the auspices of the NPF – or what the police hierarchy happily refer to as an aspect of community policing. What the police actually despise is when they (the police) do not have ‘authority’ over VGN practice. In sum, it is not the perpetrating of violence or illegality that the police find problematic. What is frowned upon, to levels of condemnation is when such is carried out independent of the police. On joint patrols which I was part of consisting of the police and members of the VGN in Langtang North, and Shendam LGAs the police witness VGN members engaging in acts of policing violence and no observation or complain is raised. The same police officers requested the VGN local government chairman of Langtang North to reprimand two of his men for beating a motor cycle operator who they accused of not paying market tolls in December 2012. Also in Langtang North LGA, the police Inspector in charge of the Reak out-post suspended a VGN member for inflicting severe wounds on a man suspected of breaking into a local provision store. The Inspector used the VGN member’s monthly allowance to pay for the suspect’s medical bills. The police it seems are particularly concerned when vigilante excesses are followed by public outcry, so the police acts to not only demonstrate to the VGN who is in charge but more importantly to maintain, and in some cases regain social legitimacy.

Another dynamic I observed was the different ways in which senior police officers, like Commissioners of Police at state headquarters and their subordinates at the local government level understood the role and place of the VGN in the policing system. Senior police officers preferred to incorporate all citizen policing groups and formations within the ambit of community policing. The Divisional Police Officers (chief police officers) in charge of these local government areas are aware of the existence of these vigilante groups, and were more pragmatic. The extent to which the police are aware of the activities and operations of these groups varies across the state. In some local government areas, there is close monitoring and supervision; in others, the situation is much more relaxed. In discussions with community leaders from selected communities,<sup>686</sup> it was clear that some communities had adopted collective strategies to manage and prevent conflicts from breaking out into violent clashes.

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<sup>685</sup> Daniel Dung (ASP), interviewed by Jimam Lar, Langtang, 10.01.2015.

<sup>686</sup> District Head of Angwan Rukuba/Farin Gada – Jos, and John Bot, District Head of Rikkos.



They identified constant communication and meetings between community leaders, establishment of neighbourhood watch committees with youths from the different groups that make up the community working together with the VGN.<sup>687</sup> The neighbourhood watch committees also serves as a quasi-early warning committee, focused on identifying likely threats to community peace, the committees serve as a bridge between the two main groups. The community leaders identified rumour control and management as a major achievement of the neighbourhood watch committee; by its activities they argue the committee has on several occasions curbed the outbreak of violence by identifying, investigating and if necessary correcting and reversing damaging rumours.

They however continued some of the practices and punishments from their predecessors of the 1970s. The dance of shame was continued in some cases as a precursor, before suspects were handed over to the police.<sup>688</sup> The practice of tying armed robbery<sup>689</sup> suspects to trees particularly when they were caught or arrested at night was widely practiced. Corporal punishment was equally continued. Again as with the vigilantes of the 1970s, within a given territory there were two key jurisdictions at play: a plurality of practice and punishment characterized by vigilantes working in cooperation with state institutions and observing statutory practices on the one hand, then on the other hand still drawing from their own codes of punishment.

In contemporary practice, there are more cases of joint operational patrol with the police in urban and semi urban areas. Some accounts from the field capture the flavour and critical importance of patrol to vigilante practice; the accounts equally link this to the interaction of the vigilante groups with the police. In a group interview with vigilantes in Pil-Gani town, Langtang North LGA the breakdown of their contribution to policing in the town had been negotiated with the police and collectively they agreed upon a mode of operation. The chairman recounts the mode of operation as follows:

When we make an arrest of a suspect, our mandate is not to spend more than 24hours investigating and interrogating a suspect, we need to hand over to the police. We also help the police to re-arrest suspects that escape from the police, sometimes during arrest other times from the police station. We also help the police to arrest suspects who

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<sup>687</sup>Ibid,

<sup>688</sup> The dance of shame refers to a practice of punishment that entailed parading the individual found guilty of an offence around the village or the market square in more larger towns, the objective being to humiliate but also to deter.

<sup>689</sup> In this robbery with machetes and small axes, not guns

refuse to honour court summons. Finally, we also have a mandate to be ready and prepared to serve as prosecution witnesses.<sup>690</sup>

What is recounted in this quotation speaks to the VGN's role in precursory policing practice. This refers to what happens to cases handled by the VGN before they reach the police station. Nansoh Danladi a Corporal with the Langtang North Divisional Command corroborates this. He notes that, "the VGN is very useful for us in doing our work. They conduct investigations; they also track down suspects and arrest them. Some of the police outposts in the local government area are manned by VGN members; they serve as the first policing point of contact to the people."<sup>691</sup> Another example that buttresses the point of VGN institutionalisation is how selected VGN chairman at the LG level were invited to join the local government security committee. The VGN training officer Plateau State, Joseph Ziman and the local government commander, Langtang North Chenvong Vongbut, are concrete examples of this practice. The VGN actively participate in policing duties such as arrest, detention and interrogation of suspected criminals. In most cases, they hand over the suspects to the police. Here the VGN members are not necessarily interested in what is captured in the respective laws and codes that guide policing; of importance is what they regard as practice. Policing practice as carried out by the NPF. Here the police are again the authority that is regulating practice, plurality is therefore operating within a dynamic that has structure and is organised.

The question then emerges, on how we should make sense of these complex dynamics described in this section. I will suggest we take Bellagamba and Klute's notion of heterarchy<sup>692</sup> as an entry point; however, our departure would be not to situate heterarchy in opposition to hierarchy. What is vital in understanding the policing landscape I have studied is to see the two notions as interacting. In other words, when we approach this context with policing institutions as our unit of analysis, we discover a clear hierarchy – with the NPF having clear authority and supremacy over all other policing actors. However, if we focus our lens on the local and consider the role and every day practices of individuals, heterarchy becomes a viable notion for our analysis. An example of this heterarchical relationship is the status of the VGN chairman in Langtang North, Jos North and Shendam LGAs serving as members of the local government security committees alongside the Divisional Police Officer

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<sup>690</sup> Group Interview, VGN Pil-Gani Langtang North LGA, 23.10.2012.

<sup>691</sup> Nansoh Danladi, interview by Jimam Lar, 22.10.2012.

<sup>692</sup> For more on the concept of heterarchy see Bellagamba and Klute, "Tracing Emergent Powers", 7-21, also see Georg Klute, "African Political Actors in 'Ungoverned Spaces': Towards a Theory of Heterarchy" in *Actors in Contemporary African Politics*, Georg Klute and Peter Skalik eds., (Zurich and Munster: Lit Verlag) 1-24.

(DPO), (the head of police detachments at the local government level). In such capacity, there is a symbolic feeling of equality, inspite of the reality that the DPO is a clear superior, in fact in practice the boss of the VGN chairman.

### **7.5. Vigilantism and Situational Epic Violence**

Since 2001, sectarian violence has played an important role in emboldening and providing social legitimacy for vigilante group members. From my observation during research across Plateau State, and insights from literature on the violence, this point had already been established. However, it was further made clear to me in a short dialogue I had with a VGN member in Bukuru, Jos South LGA of Plateau State. Having finished a group interview with the VGN members from the Hausa community in Bukuru on the outskirts of Jos, as we were leaving it was time for prayers we walked up towards the Mosque; several other people making their way to the Mosque were stopping to pay compliments to the vigilante members with us. I quipped to one of them that it is quite clear they are quite important and relevant in the community; he smiled and simply said in poetic Hausa:

*“Aia a da suna mana dariya, suna mana ganin asara, yanzu idan sun gan mu sa su sara – ikon, Allah - ai ka san duniya juyi juyi ne”*

“In the past they laughed at us, they saw us as failures, now when they see us they salute us (greet us) – You know the world turns in circles, or in life we take turns.”

In a sense, what this quotation accentuates is a process of redemption for individuals who were hitherto at the very bottom of the societal ladder. We understand how the vagrant members of the community emerge as its security providers. Before the outbreak of violence in 2001, some of the young men who were to later join the VGN were engaged in casual low-scaled part-time jobs. There are examples like Tsenyen and his colleagues, porters in the Shendam Saturday market. Part-time commercial motorcycles operators in Langtang, and seasonal sugar cane sellers in Pil-Gani Langtang North. These individuals were members of local community vigilante groups, and when the VGN was established, they were to become the core of its membership. Consequently, this meant that a bulk of the VGN ‘rank and file’ are young men who were considered to have not been successful in their attempts at acquiring education, and equally failed when they turned to learning other trades like carpentry, or apprentices with car mechanics repairers.

When the violence broke out along sectarian lines in 2001, vigilante group members adapted to the new insecurity and were important local actors in the crisis. Polarized along religious and ethnic lines, their significance metamorphosed from vigilance against crime within the community to constituting the most serious threats posed by armed militias.<sup>693</sup> As Higazi has argued, the intersection of vigilantes and militias was situational; where there was less violence vigilantes were more prominent, but elsewhere their functions merged.<sup>694</sup> Vigilante groups hitherto responsible for providing security within their immediate communities emerged and were mobilized as ‘ethnic’ and ‘religious’ militias. The situation of violent conflict, which is considered here best, captures the condition, which Judith Butler has referred to as precarity.<sup>695</sup> Heightened conditions of insecurity, uncertainty, and hopelessness, a situation that more than anything else demonstrates how the state may be unable or unwilling to protect its citizens.

This condition - temporal situation also creates the opportunity for vigilante groups, particularly individuals seeking for redemption. This role of ‘defending the community’ in time of violence thus bestowed a particular kind of legitimacy on vigilante members, that legitimacy which comes from the ability to protect the community during times of violence being perhaps the most important<sup>696</sup> – this is situated within cultural and historical notions of masculinity. It is important to however to make the point that vigilante groups were not themselves homogenous and young men from different religious and ethnic backgrounds constituted them. Therefore, during periods of violence where mobilisation was around ethnic and religious identity, the yanbanga were themselves polarised along ethnic and religious lines during the crisis in areas affected by violence. These divides have remained in some areas; there is however, towns I visited during my fieldwork where vigilante practice has emerged as one of the forums that are actually bringing feuding communities together again. A prime example is Yelwa, formerly a major commercial centre of the Plateau lowlands; Yelwa was devastated following several episodes of violence from 2003-2004, in fact it was the unfortunate massacre of Muslim residents of Yelwa in May 2004 that necessitated the Nigerian government to declare a state of emergency in Plateau State.

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<sup>693</sup> Higazi, “Social Mobilisation and Collective Violence” Africa, 108-135.

<sup>694</sup> Ibid.

<sup>695</sup> Judith Butler, Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics, Revista de Anthropology Iberoamericana, 4, no.3, (2009), [www.aibr.org/antropologia/04v03/criticos/040301b.pdf](http://www.aibr.org/antropologia/04v03/criticos/040301b.pdf)

<sup>696</sup> Hüsken, Thomas / Klute, Georg (2008), “Emerging Forms of Power in Contemporary Africa - a Theoretical and Empirical Research Outline”, Diskussionspapiere 101, Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag.

As I have previously argued, the role of ‘defending the community’ during and after episodes of sectarian violence thus bestowed a particular kind of legitimacy on vigilante members. Legitimacy, which comes from the ability to protect the community during, times of violence being perhaps the most important<sup>697</sup> – this is situated within cultural and historical notions of masculinity. It is important to however make the point that vigilante groups prior to the several episodes of violence were not themselves homogenous; they were constituted by young men from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. Therefore, during periods of violence where mobilisation was around ethnic and religious identity, the vigilantes were themselves polarised along ethnic and religious lines during the crisis in areas affected by violence. This was to become a more permanent feature of vigilante groups in Jos metropolis and its immediate surroundings.

To understand this more deeply, we have to consider the manner in which the violence in Jos has reshaped the settlement pattern in the city, enforced and at times voluntary displacement has significantly altered the settlement patterns of the city. Following the several episodes of violence, hitherto mixed quarters of the city have become segregated along mainly religious lines. This is however not to suggest that all neighbourhoods of Jos have always been mixed, it should be emphasised that residential differentiation along religious and ethnic lines in some instances has always been a feature of some parts of the city, the violence has however made the situation widespread. Neighbourhoods like Angwa Rogo-Angwan Rimi, have since 2001 lost their Christian residents most of whom were employees of the University of Jos, which is located in close proximity to the neighbourhoods. Equally, Muslims have been forced to vacate neighbourhoods like Eto Baba, and Jenta. The reality of ‘no go areas’ has drastically altered patterns of residency, transportation, and business.<sup>698</sup> Accordingly, as vigilante groups first point of organisation is the immediate community, and equally owing to the fact that mobilisation for violence is along religious and ethnic lines the residential realignment of the city has influenced the composition of the vigilante groups in particular neighbourhoods.

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<sup>697</sup> Thomas Hüsken and Georg Klute, “Emerging Forms of Power in Contemporary Africa - a Theoretical and Empirical Research Outline”, Diskussionspapiere 101, (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2008).

<sup>698</sup> For more sustained analysis on this see Jana Krause, *A Deadly Cycle: Ethno-Religious Conflict in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria*, (Working Paper: Geneva Declaration Secretariat, Geneva, 2011), 44-46, also see Shedrack Best and Carole Rakodi, *Violent Conflict and its Aftermath in Jos and Kano, Nigeria: What is the Role of Religion?* (Working Paper 69, Religions and Development Research Programme, University of Birmingham, 2011)

In an interview with the Ward Head of Chelnyap<sup>699</sup> Ibrahim Choji Dusu, this point is further explained as follows.

The major difference in the work of our vigilante groups before the 2001 crisis and after is the lack of trust. The police tried their best to bring us together but there was anxiety on both sides. We could not organise joint patrols, Christians did not want to cross over to the Muslim side and Muslims do not want to cross over to the Christian side. We have a boundary, so our vigilante patrol up to our boundary, we cannot operate the way we used to. For example, there are times our vigilante will be pursuing a thief once he crosses over to the Muslim side, at Bumbula, they cannot follow... We thank God now we have security personnel on ground, and usually they patrol on the boundary between us.<sup>700</sup>

The district head of Kabong<sup>701</sup> Da<sup>702</sup> Sallah Mandyeng Sha on the other hand narrates how vigilante policing seized in his area following the outbreak of violence in 2008. The local authorities had blamed the vigilante groups for exacerbating violence in the guise of defending their neighbourhoods. However, recently amidst rising cases of robbery in the area, the local community development association (Kabong Development Association) has remobilized to reintroduce the vigilante groups in the area. The district head recounts the process as follows:

As you can see, because of the crisis the Jos Main Market was relocated to my area of jurisdiction, on Rukuba road. In the last five years there have been many businesses opening up in my district, vegetable market, grains market, provision stores, car spare part dealers and several others. This also means we have had more cases of robbery and theft, all these boys who have no work come in the night and break into people's stores. When it got very serious the KDA (development association) Chairman came to me and requested that we re-establish the vigilantes to help the police, so I talked with the local authorities, and with the police at A Division, my area is under A Division and we succeeded in recruiting 47 boys across the district, but mostly from Rukuba road and Jenta Adamu... This is strictly Christians boys, they were screened and trained by the police, we cannot recruit Muslim boys because they have all left, they have resettled because of the violence.<sup>703</sup>

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<sup>699</sup> Chelnyap Ward comprises of the urban neighbourhoods of Tudun Peri, Anguwan Bulubula, Dogon Dutse, and Tudun Peri.

<sup>700</sup> Ibrahim Choji Dusu, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Chelnyap, Jos, 18.10.2012.

<sup>701</sup> Kabong district comprises of four (4) wards, namely: Rukuba road, Alheri, Jenta Adamu, and Angwan Suya.

<sup>702</sup> This is the Berom title for addressing older men (community elders).

<sup>703</sup> Sallah Mandyeng Sha, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Kabong, Jos, 24.10.2012.

In a group interview with the Vigilante Group of Nigeria members of Yelwa in November 2012, I could see a semblance of cooperation amongst the Christian and Muslim residents of the town, the local leader of the vigilante group Alhaji Dahiru Garba a retired police officer pointed out that:

...after the crisis here, still there was lack of trust amongst the Christians and Muslims, so you see the stakeholders in the community suggested that there should be a joint vigilante group, as it was before the crisis. Every Sunday evening we meet here (at the vigilante local office where we were having the interview) for brief lectures, about two hundred of our members. we know the law and we usually do parade just as the police do, so religious leaders and the peace committee saw how we were successful in our work they immediately identify with what we are doing saying they will support us, and we are currently living and working together with no problem.<sup>704</sup>

In interviews we had with district heads and community leaders, their idea of conflict management and resolution was largely centred on self-defence mechanisms.<sup>705</sup> While they note that, they have been invited to several meetings and participated in several forums organised by government and NGOs alike, at the community level emphasis is on “defending” and protecting the community in times of outbreaks of violence. The phenomenon of self-defence or protecting communities to an extent explains the growing sophistication of weapons employed in the several episodes of violence since 2001. Today Plateau State is flushed with many light weapons, which are acquired through smuggling networks by religious, ethnic and community development organisations. The neighbourhood watch associations previously established across the Nigerian urban landscape as a response to crime, particularly theft and armed robbery have been restructured and reorganised in parts of the state as some kind of quasi “defence forces.” Its membership is varied but largely it is made up of mainly youths, loosely coordinated by community leaders and prominent residents of the communities. Most of these groups are armed, this key transformation in self-defence and community response largely occurred over a period of years, definitely after the 2008 local election violence it became more widespread.

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<sup>704</sup> Group Interview, Vigilante Group of Nigeria, Yelwa Town Branch held at Local office, Yelwa 15.11.2012.

<sup>705</sup> All community leaders we talked too referred to “community security mechanism”

### 7.5.1. Violence, Vigilantism and Ethnic Politics

Following several circles of collective violence across Plateau State, the fractious interaction of violence and ethnic politics has also affected vigilantism. The key dynamic here refers to the relationship between the vigilante state leadership and the Plateau State government, specifically the administration of Jonah Jang (2007-2015). During the administration of Joshua Dariye (1999-2007), who preceded Jonah Jang, the VGN had made several approaches to get the support of the government. Despite all their efforts, this was not forthcoming. The government did not offer any support to the VGN, and neither was the VGN antagonised. However, following the election of Jonah Jang as governor in 2007 a new dynamic emerged. The group leadership is convinced that the Jang administration had not just declined to support their activities, but more damaging was the fact that key members of the administration had antagonised and undermined the VGN in Plateau State.<sup>706</sup> The VGN leadership argue that the evidence for this is made apparent by the attempt to factionalise the group. A rival state Vigilante Group of Nigeria was established in December 2009, by Bitrus Yilkudi Goleng<sup>707</sup> a retired Nigeria army captain. Goleng claims to be the rightful chairman and leader of the VGN in Plateau State. He claims the vigilante group, which he leads, was launched in 2009 as a non-governmental organisation. More so, he also claims to have inaugurated vigilante group leaders in all the local governments of the state.<sup>708</sup> The Alhaji Yau Rikkos led leadership has however taken Captain Goleng to court. In a suit filed at the Jos High Court, in January 2010, they challenge his claim of being the leader of the VGN. They argue amongst other things that the vigilante group of Nigeria though only registered in 1999 had been in existence informally, operating both locally and national as a non-governmental organisation. Furthermore, as I have noted earlier, the Alhaji Yau Rikkos leadership is convinced that the state government to destabilise their leadership sponsors Captain Goleng.<sup>709</sup>

Their claim does have some merit, because Captain Goleng does have ties and connections to the Jang administration. From 2007 to 2011, he was a senior special assistant to the state governor. He has been appointed as member of administrative panels to investigate the role of particular individuals in episodes of violence in parts of the state.

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<sup>706</sup> Alhaji Garba Juji, interviewed by Ibrahim Yunus, 26.09.2012.

<sup>707</sup> Captain Bitrus Yilkudi Goleng, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 19.10.2012.

<sup>708</sup> Ibid

<sup>709</sup> Alhaji Garba Juji, interviewed by Ibrahim Yunus, 26.09.12; Chenvong Vongbut, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 02.09.2012.





**Figure 19:** The signboard of the VGN office established by Captain Goleng, (12.10.2012) in contrast the office of the VGN led by Alhaji Yau, which is relatively lowly and unostentatious.

He was also appointed to Chair a Task Force on revenue mobilisation in 2012, in this role he was reporting directly to the state Governor. In my interview with him, Captain Goleng does concede his ties to the government; he however denies that the government is involved in his tussle with the Alhaji Yau led leadership of the VGN.<sup>710</sup>

To understand why the Jang administration or officials within the government would want to undermine the leadership of VGN, we have to perhaps consider the existing political context of Jos and the prevailing security dilemma. This amongst other things refers to the fractious relationship between Governor Jang and the Hausa community of Jos, the ‘Jasawa’. This has been documented and analysed in detail.<sup>711</sup> Since he became governor in 2007 Jonah Jang has had an ongoing political feud with the Hausas in Jos. This revolves around the governor’s efforts to determine who emerges as Chairman of Jos North. Jos North local government area is the key metropolis local council in contestation between the Hausas who claim to have ‘founded’ Jos, and the Berom, Anaguta, and Afizere, the ‘indigenes’, who claim to ‘own’ Jos.

<sup>710</sup> Captain Bitrus Goleng, interviewed by Jimam Lar, 19.10.2012.

<sup>711</sup> Ostien, “Jonah Jang and the Jasawa”...

This has continued to generate insecurity and tension, between the Berom dominated Plateau State government of Jonah Jang and the Jasawa (Hausa) in Jos North.

Governor Jang and his advisers never gave the VGN a chance to prove their loyalty, or otherwise. Presently across the states where the VGN operates, the organisation relies on state support and public goodwill. An organisation that solicits for patronage to support its objectives of assisting the police. The Plateau State government failed to look beyond the Jasawa (Hausa) led leadership of the Plateau State branch of the VGN. Significantly, they would have discovered that the leadership of the VGN in the state is multi-ethnic, and multi religious. Thereby, reflecting the heterogeneous landscape of the state- for instance the executive council roster of the group's executive reveals officials from across the state. I met and interviewed some of these executive members.<sup>712</sup>

Emerging from this narrative of segregation, and identity politics three key points can be deduced. First, discourses of domination and oppression targeted at major ethnic or religious groupings by minorities while useful, is a single lens of interpreting the socio-political landscape. In other words when given the opportunity minority groups equally seek to dominate and marginalise other minority groups. Second, while the impact of succeeding episodes of violence has been a segregation of urban and rural spaces across Plateau State. An interrogation of different social groupings, specifically in our case for purposes of maintaining societal order reveals some exceptions. In its composition, the VGN is religiously and ethnically mixed. Unfortunately, the Plateau State government sought to engage with a single lens, the lens of 'identity politics'. In any case, a closer look beyond the Hausa-Jasawa Muslim led leadership is a heterogeneous grouping that for all purposes is soliciting for patrons, irrespective of religious or ethnic affiliation. The task of making complete the institutionalisation process does not provide the VGN with options of who to choose, and who to reject. They rather deal with whoever faith has brought their way. In this context, whoever is the governor of the state, the commissioner of police or a state official the VGN is disposed to receiving support and recognition. They are willing to pursue all available ideas that would take them a step closer to consummating the institutionalisation process. The third and final point, the politically powerful and state agents in high office still hold onto discourses of exclusion, while it is people at the lower levels who seem more keen and active to seek means and strategies to better manage differences.

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<sup>712</sup> For instance, I interviewed the state Deputy Chairman Chenvong Vongbut a Tarok Christian from Langtang, and the state training commander Joseph Zhiman from Jos, and Moday Gokum, branch Chairman Pankshin LGA.

### **7.5.2. VGN Policing Practice: Accounts from the Field**

Between September and October, 2012 I went out on patrol with the VGN, Shendam branch for eight nights observing the practice of plural policing patrol in Shendam town. These patrols are a joint operation with the Shendam Divisional Police Command. In December 2014 to January 2015, I spent four days observing vigilante policing at checkpoints mounted on the major road linking the Jos Plateau to the Plateau lowlands. The checkpoints observed were specifically mounted to counter a wave of armed robbery on this major road. My participation in these night patrols and checkpoints was important because it reveals first-hand the dynamics of operational interaction between the police and the VGN at the local level. Furthermore, it gives us insight into how the VGN actually does policing work, the insight gathered from observation informs our understanding of what motivates and drives individuals to join the VGN, beyond what is presented in interviews. The following accounts attempt to render this clear.

#### **Account One: The Check Point -Night Road Patrol (Shendam)**

To patrol the town at night means not only policing the town's residents: you are also policing night travellers who are either arriving in the town or passing through to a neighbouring or a distant destination. Usually from 11:30pm or 12:00 midnight road blocks are set up with logs of wood and wood planks with a line of nails dangerously sprouting out, a motorist who wills to defy and not stop will of course have his/her tyres punctured. From afar an approaching vehicle sees the bright light burning off a thread soaked in kerosene. At first commuters would assume that policemen man the checkpoints; only when one arrives at the roadblock does one realize that one is dealing not just with policemen but also with a local town vigilante. Sometimes the routine takes just a few minutes: asking about identification, where the travellers are coming from, and their destination. If the vigilantes are satisfied, they allow the vehicle to proceed; if they are not, they request the commuters to disembark and they commence a check. I have witnessed episodes where drivers arrived at our checkpoint with their palms fisted motioning to hand over money, but on some occasions they were berated and accused of trying to hide something. The area is still part of a larger conflict zone and has witnessed cyclical violence, so such drivers could be accused of trying to hide arms. On other occasions, the vigilantes take the money and allow the vehicle to pass. Usually in the morning, all the men assemble at the local chief's house for some kind of a debriefing session, after which they are dismissed until the evening. The checkpoint is more than a security post, it is equally a place where men, young and old converge and engage in discussions over a

variety of issues. There is conversation about local politics and gossip, about wives and about girlfriends. Also of interest are discussions about football from the European leagues, usually people are able to watch the matches live for a small entrance fee. The live transmission is courtesy of cable sports networks like the South African company Super Sports. Discussions and debates on Real Madrid and Barcelona, Manchester United, Arsenal and Chelsea can get very frenzy and heated. I remember this particular night when the police sergeant in charge of patrol on the day had to remind the football enthusiast that it was actually late at night and they were on patrol not in a beer parlour. There are some nights when individuals take turns narrating and taking stock of the day's events. The checkpoint therefore becomes a social forum where friendship is cultivated and nourished. For these individuals it is a place where police and vigilantes meet, here as fellow members of the policing institution. The VGN members enjoy the camaraderie that accompanies their association with this police. It is another reminder of the active practice of the VGN members to be recognised by the community as policing against of the state.

The group of individuals on duty usually take turn to wait at the checkpoint and to patrol around the neighbourhoods. On a given night, there are usually 8-10 personnel on duty around this quarter of the town. Four to five individuals remain by the checkpoint while others go on patrol in pairs, or in groups of three. For those operating the checkpoint, there are normally at least two armed police officers with two or three VGN members. Those on petrol usually have at least one-armed police officer, with two VGN members. There were however, instances where I accompanied two VGN members without a police officer with us. When on patrol, there is usually awareness not to make too much noise. The idea of patrol is to catch offenders, and not to alert them and allow them to escape. There are however some exceptions to this patrolling norm. After a couple of nights on patrol I observe some specific trends, to start with I was not allowed to choose which patrol team I would accompany. I was always with the local government deputy leader of the VGN. When I did suggest going out with a different group, the local government provost marshal (discipline officer) of the VGN joined me. This objective of this could be read in two different ways; one could conclude that they thought it expedient to have a minder following me around, to limit me to what they wanted me to see. Alternatively, we could also see it in positive light that such actions were taken for my own security. After all, shortly after my arrival in Shendam I was taken to meet the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in charge of the local government police command to introduce myself and fix a date for an interview. The DPO told the VGN commander that I

was the responsibility of the VGN and he should take care of me. This could be understood literally.

On my substantive points about the pattern of the patrol, I noticed how the VGN patrol targets neighbourhoods of prominent people in the community. The local government chairman, other local politicians, leading businessmen, residences and business premises. The political economic logic is very clear. The financial patronage that comes from prominent members of the community does encourage the VGN to give more attention and security to them. Two instances illustrate this point. The first relates to a particular night while on patrol we were passing the house of a member of the local government legislator. Interestingly, we did not just pass by, rather we dwelled around the house – the constant barking of dogs got the legislator out. Realising that it was the VGN he commended them for their services to the community and asked the leader of the team to meet him in the morning at the local government headquarters. On a different night, while on patrol we went round the house of a prominent businessman. He called out from the bedroom and the leader of the VGN informed him it was the VGN/Police patrol. Relieved the businessman also came out and presented a gift of some money and a bottle of gin. This also as I previously noted is the political economy of vigilantism.

From the forgone example, it is fair to suggest that motivations for joining the vigilante are twofold. First, as already mentioned, being a vigilante brings prestige and authority. The idea of going on patrol, having the power to arrest and to punish is a huge motivation for the young men that get involved. The Chairman<sup>713</sup> of the vigilante group in, Shendam Local government sums it up in the following conversation I had with him regards vigilante policing in rural parts of Shendam local government area:

Lar: Do you go for patrols with the police?

Chairman: Yes, even with soldiers sometimes but not with civil defence.

Lar: Do you punish offenders?

Chairman: First, this is mainly in the rural areas where our men are by and large the police officers - we beat the person – [only] a bit so he doesn't get injured - and we later tie him and

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<sup>713</sup> Interview with The Maiangwa of Longla, and Chairman Vigilante Group of Nigeria Shendam, at his residence 13.11.2012

take him round the community (dance of shame). After that, we take the person to the police. We give them details and sometimes act as witness in the court.

The second motivation relates to a certain kind of political economy of being a vigilante. Simply put it creates a means of a livelihood. At first glance though this is not clear; when you first pose the question of what motivates individuals to volunteer, earning money and favours is not admitted as a motivation; rather altruistic factors are mentioned. However, when you spend several weeks on night patrol with the groups it becomes clear that vigilantism is not an altruistic pastime. The post 1999-vigilante groups in Plateau State and other parts of northern Nigeria demonstrate how vertical encompassment<sup>714</sup> evolves fully. Vigilantism has increased in prestige, consequently social legitimacy and popular acceptance is high within the communities these groups operate in. The forgone description refers to a contemporary manifestation, and further evidence of the institutionalisation processes. When I first conducted field research in 2012, in interviews recorded with leaders and members of the VGN, most of them lamented the lack of support from the local government and a general lack of uniforms, boots, torchlights, and other policing paraphernalia. The always took the opportunity to emphasise the dire situation in which they were doing the job. When I returned in 2015, the change in the fortunes of the VGN was conspicuous. Lamentations had not necessarily ceased, but they were now tempered with some level of contentment. New uniforms had been procured and distributed; the cooperation with the police had been deepened. Activities like the highway checkpoint described previously, provided the VGN with high levels of visibility, recognition and legitimacy. I soon realised that some VGN members who had been reluctant to talk to me previously, were suddenly more enthusiastic. They had erroneously believed that I had a hand in their turn of fortune. To their disappointment I made it politely clear that while I had made effort my intervention was not responsible for the ongoing process of their institutionalisation, and perhaps it was more probable the security situation in the state would be a more convincing and plausible catalyst.

#### **Account Two: The Checkpoint-Daytime Highway Patrol (Pankshin-Dengi-Langtang Road)**

In December 2014 to January 2015, I returned to Plateau State on a short field trip. This was to fill in some emerging gaps in my thesis. I encountered a VGN that had in two years since my last research visit become more emboldened and more active in its policing practice. An illustration of this point is the highway checkpoints located on the Pankshin-Kabwir-Dengi-

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<sup>714</sup> See conceptual framework, notion taken from Gratz, "Devi and his Men" 79-97.

Langtang road. The critical importance of the checkpoints is to carry out security checks on travellers, in an attempt to curb the menace of robbery along the road. The background of the checkpoints is a consequence of the sectarian violence that swept the area a decade ago – the legacy of the violence is the proliferation of small arms. It is these arms that criminal elements have used to perpetrate crimes on the highway. The Kanke local government commander of the VGN, Nicodemus Ngozi Chukwu, a motorcycle mechanic who arrived in the area in the early 1980s outlines the objectives behind setting up the checkpoints:

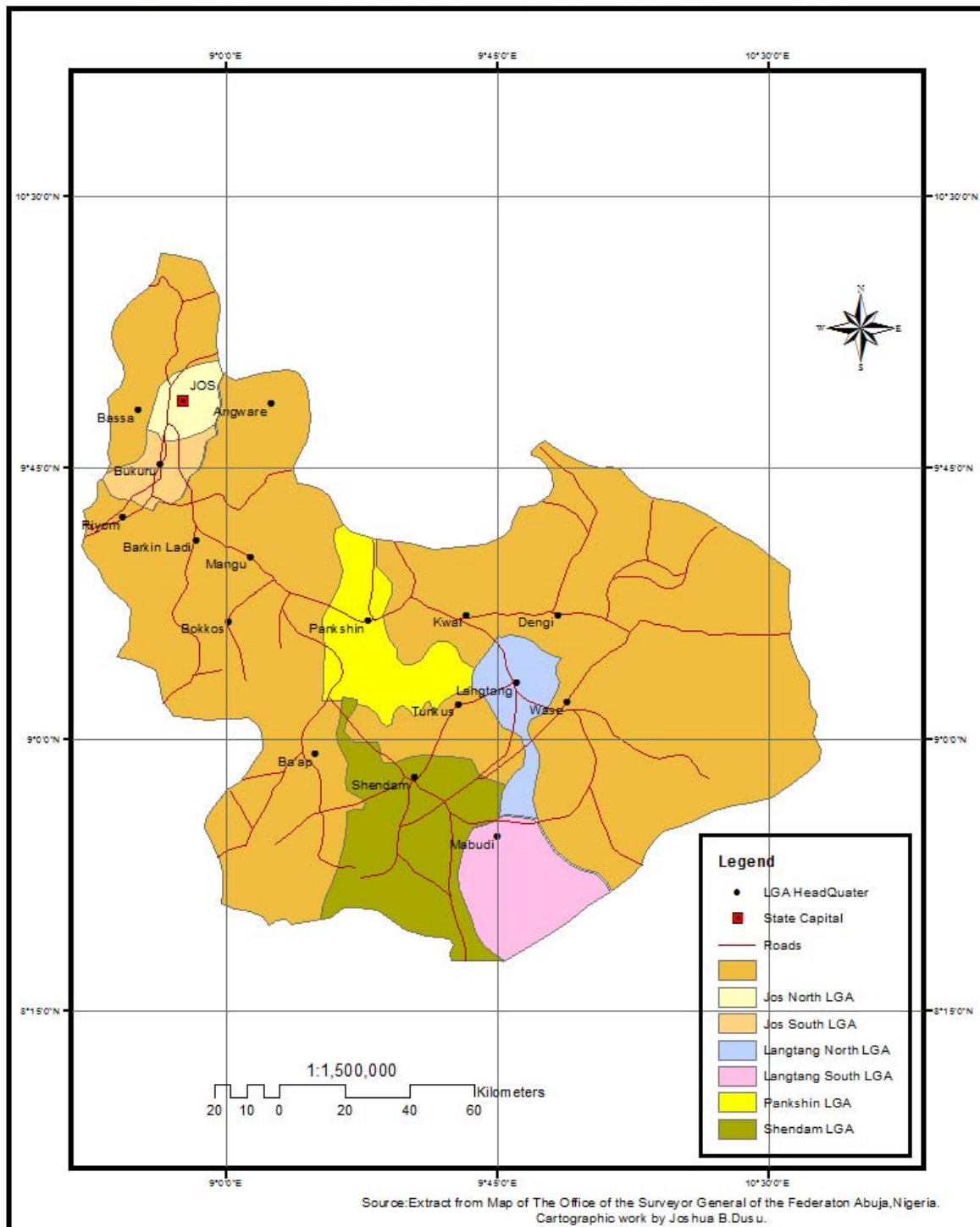
...the major challenge we had was a sudden rise in arm robbery on this road. In the past, these were occasional cases at night, those responsible were outsiders. Unfortunately as a result of the crisis and violence there are so much arms circulating and when you have a lot of young men with no livelihood, no jobs this is what happens. The robbery cases were particularly alarming because it was occurring in the daytime. We had consultations with the police and it was agreed that we mount the checkpoints. It was our initiative and the divisional police officer in charge of the local government area said we should go ahead.<sup>715</sup>

The VGN take turns in working at the checkpoints. The commander prepares a weekly roster of three duty schedules, morning; afternoon; and evening. There are three checkpoints on the road, manned by the Kanke local government VGN. The first checkpoint is between Kabwir one of the main towns in the area and Kwall, the local government headquarters. The second checkpoint is between Kwall and Amper. The third checkpoint is located on the Amper-Dengi road, in close proximity to the local government boundary between Kanke and Kanam local government areas. During a duty schedule, I observed that there are normally 6-7 men operating the checkpoints. This number is not constant as sometimes some VGN members take excuse to attend to pressing family matters. The checkpoints are made with large stones situated on the road to create a single zigzagged lane. This means the way of passage is alternated between the opposing directions. On busy market days like Monday, Thursday, and Saturday – Pankshin, Dawaki, and Amper markets respectively, there is more traffic on the highway. Motorist would therefore spend more time at the checkpoints.

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<sup>715</sup> Nicodemus Ngozi Chukwu, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Kabwir, Kanke Local Government Area, 09.01.2015.

## L.G.A STUDY AREAS IN PLATEAU STATE



**Figure 20:** Plateau State map showing Local Governments where research was conducted and road network.



The procedure I witnessed is essentially routinised. A car arrives, after an exchange of pleasantries the VGN ask the driver of his point of origin and destination. After which they inquire what the driver is carrying in the boot of the car. Often if the car is on commercial business, the boot would contain the personal effects and luggage of the passengers. The next decision is the critical one for the vigilante members on duty, and more so for the driver and passengers. Whereas the forgone exchanges may last for a few seconds at most a minute or two, if the vigilante members decide that the car should be checked then the driver and passengers could be held up for a period of thirty minutes to an hour, while the vigilante members conduct their check. Bags are opened and the car seats are searched. This therefore means that in an attempt to avoid the check, and the delay that comes with it, some drivers decide to pay-off the vigilantes and hope to get expedient passage. I have witnessed a varied reaction to this – while on very rare occasions the VGN members would frown and still demand to search the cars, often it serves, as a means of easy passage and the search is not conducted. The challenge here is that VGN members are sent out to patrol without much incentive. Therefore, it is not unexpected that the checkpoint is not a point of checking the proliferation of arms; rather it becomes a means of generating funds. The arm robbery may have been curtailed as the VGN commander proudly reports during my conversation with him. However, another practice is inadvertently recreated.



**Figure 21:** The Checkpoint-Daytime Highway Patrol (Pankshin-Dengi-Langtang Road)  
9.01.2015

The VGN members turn out in a mixture of attires, some are kitted in the complete VGN uniform, others are garbed in a combination of VGN, police, military, and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) uniforms. As one of the vigilantes responded when I inquired why they wear such a mix “...to look official he answered.”<sup>716</sup> Again, the importance of the uniform as a symbol of authority and legitimation is made clear. Another feature of the checkpoints is the tool used for the job. The VGN members also carry an assortment of weapons; some have den guns (popular amongst hunters), machetes, sticks etc.

## 7.6. Vigilante Profiles

### 1. Dakachi (Ward Head) Alias ‘Hot’

The VGN Chairman of Shendam is also the Ward Head of Shendam town. The Dakachin Shendam, alias Hot – a name he acquired in his youth as one of the ‘tough boys’ in the community. Now 42, Hot a man of average height about 5.8, is a respectable local community leader and Chairman of the VGN in the Local Government, when you arrive at his house in the morning, there are people gathered waiting to have audience with the Dakachi. Some with cases to settle, others are vigilantes converging to report on the previous night’s patrol. Hot sits in his *Zaure* Asked for an introduction or a mini bio Hot is keen to make the point that his has not been an easy road, noting how it was tough but he is quite pleased to be where he is today:

I was born here in Shendam, and when I was old enough I went to school, I finished primary school and was enrolled in secondary school. Unfortunately I did not finish, I left school in SS1 (senior secondary 1, formerly form 4). So you see I cheated myself...but by God’s grace I started farming, then my contemporaries made me youth chairman of this area, I was youth chairman for 15 years. Then I joined the vigilante work, under our former chairman Delong, I also worked under other chairmen. You see, in this work we start and stop, and start again. Then when it was re-established in 2004, I was one of the leaders and I was made chairman in 2010, and the Local Government began giving us allowance. My Dad was the Dakachi, so when he died my family said I should contest the position, and I was favourable considered by His Royal Highness and his council.

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<sup>716</sup> Group Interview, VGN Kanke, by Jimam Lar, at Checkpoint, Pankshin -Kanke-Langtang Road, 10.01.2015.

Therefore, I use all my experience as youth chairman, and vigilante chairman to do my work as Dakachi, and for me the two roles do not clash, because I think they complement one another.<sup>717</sup>...We work with the police, and collaborate with them in different ways. However, we are not working for the police we are working for the people, so we are like the police but our work is not the same with them...I hope you get my point? We are official, we are registered, but we are not like community-policing committees, would need more recognition to do our work better.

Dakachi Hot's profile as shown in his own narration is an example of plurality. Embodied in his individual is the traditional institution, secondly his role as VGN commander provides another type of authority. As he noted, social legitimacy is also critical for his practice. Therefore, his role as VGN commander and traditional ruler raises the profile of the VGN within his community.

## **2. Mai-Angwan Ndaushep Chenvong Vongbut**

Then In Langtang North LGA we find the much older, 63 year old Maiangwa Ndaushep Chenvong Vongbut, Ward Head of the Nassarawa quarter of Langtang town and chairman VGN Langtang North LGA. Vongbut had a contrasting career path to Hot; he had no formal education, as a young man he had worked on the Lagos docks as a porter with the Nigerian Ports Authority returning to Langtang in the late 1970s as he vividly remembers the spectacle of Nigeria hosting FESTAC 77<sup>718</sup> just a year before he returned home. In the late 1980s, Vongbut was selected amongst others to constitute Langtang's *Yanbanga* (vanguard) group, in response to rising crime waves and shortfall in police personnel and equipment.<sup>719</sup> When the Vigilante Group of Nigeria was registered in 1999, he emerged as Langtang North chairman and was also selected as the Plateau State Deputy Chairman. He works closely in collaboration with the Divisional Police Officer in recruiting and training new members of the group in the local government. He has attended several courses organised by the National body of the organisation, including a course on using firearms.<sup>720</sup> For Vongbut the DPO is his

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<sup>717</sup> Dakachi Hot, Interview by Jimam Lar, Shendam, 10.11.2012

<sup>718</sup> FESTAC 77 is an acronym for the Second Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture. Held in Lagos, Nigeria in September 1977 it was organised by UNESCO and under the patronage of the then Nigerian military government led by Olusegun Obasanjo.

<sup>719</sup> See previous section of Socialisation from the Police.

<sup>720</sup> Ndaushep Chenvong Vongbut, Interview by Jimam Lar, Langtang 22.10.2012.

boss, but also his colleague as they attend local government security meetings together<sup>721</sup>, he is quick to show and display documents and pictures of himself and his men taken over the years, during parade drills and attending training courses. This further explains why, even when superior police officers at state headquarters frown at the suggestion of the existence of a plural policing landscape,<sup>722</sup> rather preferring to see the VGN as part of community policing. Police officers down the ladder in charge of Divisional Commands at the local government level while accepting the opinion of their superiors in theory, in practice however embrace the VGN and regard them as partners in the maintenance of law and order.

The ward heads profiled here are however local leaders, so the next point is to consider is what sort of young men do they lead. In contemporary Plateau State what precisely is the profile of a vigilante member, profiles of vigilante 'rank and file' can equally shed light on how the duality of belonging manifest, the following are two examples of vigilante voices, specifically outlining their backgrounds. In regards to daily jobs of urban and rural vigilantes we find butchers, vulcanisers<sup>723</sup>, vegetable and grain market porters, Okada or Going (commercial motorcycle operators),<sup>724</sup> farmers, fishermen, carpenters, secondary school students, and as I was told, 'applicants'<sup>725</sup> (the unemployed).

### **3. Joseph Tsenyen**

Tsenyen as he prefers to be called is one of the vigilante group members in Shendam town, one of Hot's men. Tsenyen is lean but not frail, as the physical demands of working, as a porter on market days requires a certain level of muscularity and sturdiness. Formally, he is without regular employment, at least he does regard his three days a week job, of loading lorries as a part time job. On the first asking, he responds that he is a farmer, in his words the carrier of his ancestors. Tsenyen had very little formal education, primary school and secondary school up to the junior secondary 3. He was one of the first to be selected and trained by the police in the early 2000s, he has also attended state courses organised by local NGOs that support the VGN on issues of rights advocacy. For Tsenyen and his colleagues they are selected and trained to serve the community, to try to rid it of crime. They narrate of a process, which is precisely made to be official. The job of being a vigilante member requires

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<sup>721</sup> Ibid

<sup>722</sup> Olakpe, COP, Plateau State, interviewed by Jimam Lar. 07.01.2014.

<sup>723</sup> Refers to mechanics who engage in filling air, and repairing tyres for cars and motor bikes.

<sup>724</sup> 'Okada' is more widely used in Southern Nigerian cities; in Plateau 'Going' is more commonly used.

<sup>725</sup> In an attempt to maintain some level of dignity and amidst the very high rates of unemployment, the unemployed would introduce themselves as applicants. This occurs even in cases where the said individual may have been without a job for 5 to 10 years.

one to go through some particular steps, in other words, one is part of a select group, and this point comes out clearly in the following excerpt of Tsenyen describing the selection process:

JL: How were you selected? Can you briefly recount the process?

JT: First of all, forms were given to area heads to select the suitable people who can do vigilante work. Therefore it is the area head that selected us, we filled the forms and attached a passport photograph and submitted the form at the District Office. Then we were invited to the DPO's office, where we were interviewed.

JL: You were all interviewed?

JT: Yes, the DPO was present...they wanted to make sure that there is no criminal or ex-convict among us then they handed us over to the SSS Department (State Security Service). After we got clearance from the SSS, then we went to the Local Government Inter-Faith committee<sup>726</sup>. Religious leaders Christian and Muslim advised us on the importance of working together as one. You know we have experience religious crisis, but today we work together Christians and Muslims. Since then we have been working very well with each other, we work together with the police, and the community appreciates our sacrifice.

#### **4. Ponbin Takaduniya**

Ponbin Takaduniya (after wards referred to as PT) hails from Limun village in Bwarat district, Langtang North LGA. His odyssey through formal education terminated after primary education, and he turned to farming, which he regards as his current occupation. PT is an adherent of the Tarok traditional religion, and he has a deity that he worships, accordingly there are specific days that he worships the deity, it is a family deity that he inherited from his father. PT provides us with an interesting brand of a vigilante member; 44 years old, he has been a vigilante for over twenty years. First recruited in the late 1980s, he continued working even during the periods when collective vigilante practice ceased.

I was selected as a vigilante from Limun, my village. Then there was a lot of crime in our community and the Chief gave the directive to Moses Vongchak and Katangko to organise and select some young men from the different clans to serve as yanbanga (vanguards) in the

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<sup>726</sup> Having emerged from several episodes of violent sectarian conflict, potential vigilante members are advised and counselled by a committee of inter-faith religious leaders.

community. Katangko trained me, he is a retired police officer he trained us in police drills and parade, and how to be disciplined and obey the orders of superiors.<sup>727</sup>

In the current dispensation, he is one of few who are embedded within police stations. He reports to duty every morning at the Reak Police Outpost, Bwarat District, Langtang North LGA and takes orders like the regular police officers from the officer in charge of the outpost, usually an Inspector. PB is self-kitted in all black attire, looking more like an officer of the Nigeria Police Force, and less like his colleagues of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria whose uniform is a surprisingly bright pink.<sup>728</sup> His weapon of choice is a baton, made of wood and is of arm's length. He also carries handcuffs in his pocket, as he makes the point that "you never know when duty calls".<sup>729</sup> He is the reference point for vigilante achievement in Bwarat district, traditional rulers praise his good work, and police officers commend him and speak of him in glowing terms.<sup>730</sup>

#### **5. Alhaji Dahiru Garba (ASP, rtd.)**

Current vigilantism in Plateau State is also influenced by the presence of retired police officers who have joined vigilante practice after retirement. Amongst such of those we encountered is Dahiru Garba, the 68-year-old head of the VGN in Yelwa town, Shendam LGA. Yelwa is a market town straddled by a T-junction bringing together routes to Shendam-Lafia, Ibi in Taraba state, Mabudi-Fajul in Langtang South LGA, and Langtang-Wase. All the above-mentioned towns are located within a rich agricultural belt, thus making Yelwa a major commercial hub in the lowlands of Plateau State. As a major commercial centre, Yelwa is equally diverse as different ethnic groups have over the years settled there. The religious geography of the town and its environs is equally diverse, with Christians, Muslims and traditional religion adherents. Yelwa (Nshar) is administratively part of Shendam Local Government Area. Yelwa gained notoriety for outbreaks of violent sectarian conflict in 2002, and twice in 2004 (February and May). Therefore, Alhaji Dahiru presides over a local branch of the VGN that has emerged from a period of violence mobilised along sectarian lines. As Alhaji Dahiru points out:

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<sup>727</sup> Ponbin Takaduniya, interview by Jimam Lar, Dadur, 21.10.2012.

<sup>728</sup> When I returned in December 2014, the VGN uniform had been changed to dark brown.

<sup>729</sup> Ponbin Takaduniya, interview by Jimam Lar, Dadur, 21.10.2012.

<sup>730</sup> These points made at a community meeting Dadur town on modalities to revamp vigilantism, in attendance were Traditional rulers, Community Elders, Youth Leaders, selected Vigilante Members, and the Police Officer in Charge, Reak Police Outpost.

Our vigilante group in Yelwa under my leadership was formed in 2006, to respond to high rates of crime but to also bring about unity between Christians and Muslims following very serious violence. Working together as Christians and Muslims, we get to understand how best to live together. We started with 50 men; today we have 250 men, 130 Muslims and 120 Christians operating in the different wards of Yelwa town and its surroundings. So we are sacrificing not only too bring security but also try to unify our communities.<sup>731</sup>

## **6. Female Vigilante(s): Tokenism in Search of Institutionalisation**

When I set out to study vigilante policing, the assumption I had was that I was going to be studying, men – young men to be precise. However, during my fieldwork I came across female vigilante members, whom I interviewed.<sup>732</sup> I tried to pursue this finding further and tried to make sense of the basis of the female vigilante. What informed their membership? What was their role in the VGN?

From what I gathered in the field from discussions but also from observation, I would initially suggest that the recruitment of female members should be seen as another attempt to institutionalise vigilante practice. Prior to the establishment of the VGN in 1999, vigilante policing as practiced in the areas I have studied had strictly been a young man's job. Local notions of masculinity, young men defending the community as I have previously argued in chapter 5 was dominant in the consciousness of the people. This is as it particularly relates to their thinking on the provision of security and the maintenance of order in their community. However, the VGN leadership believed that one of the strategies to draw recognition from the police and other security agencies was the recruitment of female members. The national leader of the VGN, Alhaji Ali Sokoto made this clear to me when I interviewed him in his office at Kaduna:

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<sup>731</sup> Alhaji Dahiru Garba, interview by Jimam Lar, Yelwa, Shendam LGA, 15.11.2014.

<sup>732</sup> Kande Bako and Hannatu Moses, Female VGN Members Kaduna, 17.12.2012. I do not have profiles of any female VGN members because I did not come across any female members in Plateau state, though I was told that there had been and there were plans to recruit women in 2015. The female members I talked too were from the Kaduna state command.

In regards to women members. We have realised that we have to also recognise the importance of having women members. There are some investigations that require the involvement of women. For example, if you have to go into a compound where purdah is observed, as a man this can be complicated. Therefore, in such cases we would require female members to take over. Also generally, we have to recognise that women are part of our society and they can serve the community, and help to maintain security. This is very important.<sup>733</sup>

Not all the members however carry the opinion and views of the national leader. During a group interview, I asked the VGN members of Shimankar town on their thoughts on the potential recruitment of female members, and the following conversation transpired:

JL: Do you have any female members?

Res.: No we don't.

JL: During recruitment, do women have interest in joining the VGN?

Res: Yes, but we do not allow them.

JL: Why don't you allow them?

Res: The reason is that most women and girls here prefer to go to school and work in the hospitals. A girl who joined the group in the past, unfortunately, her parents discouraged her and asked her to leave the group, and she resigned. Women cannot participate in night patrol; morally it is even not a good idea. Therefore, for now, the idea does not work, but maybe in the future we can reconsider.<sup>734</sup>

This is the general sentiment. I found the response on the recruitment of female members mixed. While the more senior leaders supported the idea, members expressed general reservation. This was equally tempered with caveats on different roles and functions for female vigilante members. For example as it was stated in the quotation, the night patrol was not considered as a function that the female members would engage in. These reservations largely agree to what I witnessed in practice while observing patrols. There are given ways of which men are expected to behave, and to react to danger. Often on the patrol, one hears a patrol leader encouraging a VGN member to 'act like a man, and not show fear like a woman.' This could be in response or reaction to a dog barking as we passed by a residence. I would therefore suggest that we should see the idea of female vigilante members as part of the institutionalisation process. The VGN seeks to be similar to the police; they have achieved

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<sup>733</sup> Alhaji Ali Sokoto, interviewed by Jimam Lar, Kaduna, Nigeria, 17.12.2015.

<sup>734</sup> Group Interview, VGN Shimankar, 15.11.2015.



this in varied ways. In the structure of the group, and in their general practice of policing – by embracing the paraphernalia of officiousness; uniforms, and identity cards. The recruitments of female members for the VGN I would contend are part of a tokenistic strategy to institutionalize vigilante policing. The challenges, aspirations, programmes on how to improve the participation of women and other groups and segments of society in the provision and maintenance of security has been clearly articulated.<sup>735</sup> Whether this will be actively pursued is however a different subject matter.



**Figure 22:** Researcher with Commander General, a National Official and two Female VGN Members. National Headquarters, Kaduna, Nigeria. 17.12.2012.

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<sup>735</sup> For more on this see Funmi Olonisakin, and Awino Okech, *Women and Security Governance in Africa*, (Pambazuka Press: 2011), This articulation is found in the practice of the Nigerian government, for example the first batch of female cadets recruited to the Nigerian Defence Academy commenced training in September 2011.

## 7.7. Understanding Vigilante Identification and Belonging in Practice

Drawing from Geschiere and Cooper,<sup>736</sup> I argue that as part of a policing system the VGN strives for belonging, the level or extent to which a social grouping feels and experiences a sense of recognition, respect, and importance.<sup>737</sup> Belonging as I have outlined in the conceptual framework earlier, becomes of interest when we are able to understand its function, and how it serves purposes of inclusion and exclusion.<sup>738</sup> The preceding profiles demonstrate the manifestation of my notion of the duality of belonging on three different levels, accordingly this follows from the category of individuals and how they have been socialised. On the first level are Vongbut and Hot, holders of traditional positions of authority, and custodians of power at the local level, yet doubling as vigilante leaders. Then we have Alhaji Dahiru Garba in Yelwa and Yakubu Adamu in Shendam, both retired police officers, relied upon by the community for their know how and as former colleagues they are trusted by the policemen the vigilantes collaborate with, their participation in vigilante practice further entrenches legitimacy to the VGN, this is through the experience of policing they bring, this is very important, but as Dakachi Hot notes, they also help the VGN to navigate its relationship with the police:

Sometimes Alhaji Garba comes to see me in Shendam and we go to see the DPO together, and the DPO I think has more respect for us, Alhaji Aliyu advises us how to engage with the police, but also how to gather information on likely criminals and suspects. As I told you, we are a very serious organisation, with retired police officers and respected people as our members. Some people like to write us off as idle people and vagabonds, but that is not true. We take care to select our members, not everybody who fills the form is selected, and we screen applicants very well. They have to pass the interview with the DPO, and we also engaging in training. In Shendam LGA Alhaji Garba has been very good for us, very, very good.<sup>739</sup>

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<sup>736</sup> Geschiere's use of belonging delineates functions of inclusion and exclusion. Cooper challenges us to employ concepts that are flexible enough to satisfy the requirement of relational constructivist social theory, yet robust enough to have purchase on the phenomenon we try to understand.

<sup>737</sup> Higazi and Lar, (2015) "Articulations of Belonging..."

<sup>738</sup> Geschiere, *Perils of Belonging*, 32. In Geschiere's analysis, this functions within the context of social groupings, aptly deployed by Geschiere to understand how identities are mobilised. In our context when non-state policing groups aspire to 'belong', it is to be included as part of a policing system, but equally to exclude particular forms of community policing.

<sup>739</sup> Dakachi Hot, interview Jimam Lar, Shendam, 10.11.2012.

The third category is the 'rank and file' of the VGN, the ground soldiers, who engage in everyday patrol. The likes of Tsenyen in Shendam town, Ponbin in rural Bwarat district Langtang North LGA, or the individuals who narrated their experiences in-group interviews in Shendam, Shimankar, Yelwa, Pil-Gani and Dadur. Collectively, they are bounded by a certain articulation of belonging. For non-state security actors, and particular the contemporary manifestation examined in this study (the Vigilante Group of Nigeria) their identification as a social grouping engaged in policing practice has a function of inclusion and exclusion.

Vigilante group members seek to exclude on two different levels. Though they are part of a policing system, they seek to delineate themselves from the police. There is a conviction amongst vigilante members that their social legitimacy is enhanced based on differentiating themselves from the police. Secondly, the VGN also strives to see itself as different from everyday structures of community policing, rather VGN members insist on their importance as a legitimate social grouping with responsibility to secure, protect and punish.

In his study of mobilisation for security in South African townships in the suburbs of Cape Town, Fourchard urges us to consider community policing and vigilantism as two processes to be analysed together as mobilisation, the former from the state and the latter from community members.<sup>740</sup> As it relates to the process of mobilisation, particularly the role of the state where we find that within the historical trajectory, both community policing initiatives and some forms of vigilantism have emerged from a strong top-down dynamic, Fourchard's contention should be considered, more so senior police officers interviewed have rejected the idea that vigilantism is distinct from community policing.

However, in extending Fourchard's point we observe the practices and listening to contemporary experiences of vigilante members, one is convinced to the point of suggesting that there are manifestations of vigilante policing where we find clear distinctions with community policing, to be sure, the vigilante group members are convinced that this is the case. Vigilante members have been socialised to regard themselves as distinct from the police, but a constitutive part of a plural policing landscape, and yet still not to be seen as part of community policing initiatives.

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<sup>740</sup> See Laurent Fourchard, "The Politics of Mobilization for Security in South African Townships" in *Africa Affairs*, (first published online August 16, 2011,) doi:10.1093/afraf/adr046, 3.

## 7.8. Conclusion

As the thesis has demonstrated, the Nigerian context has a popular history of vigilante groups responding to waves of theft and armed robbery. It is however also clear that since the return to civil rule in 1999 vigilantism has further proliferated. My main objective in this chapter has been to show how the aforementioned proliferation has unfolded, and what it means for policing. I have examined how state and non-state policing actors have interacted, through cooperation and negotiation. I argue that this recent manifestation should be seen as the latest stage of a process of institutionalising plural policing. What has emerged from this chapter reveals that the vigilante groups that emerged from the historical process of institutionalisation of plural policing actually support the state and its agencies. Therefore, while the Bakassi Boys, the OPC and the Hisbah were emerging on to the scene the VGN was being registered, consequently the structures, organisation, and practices of vigilantism were being further transformed with the active approval and involvement of the state. I am in agreement with arguments that have cautioned us from always concluding that the increasing prominence of non-state security actors is an automatic feature of state decline in power and authority.<sup>741</sup> Therefore, plurality in this context refers to a policing landscape that actually bridges the state and non-state divide, particularly at the micro level. Conclusively, on this point in terms of the provision of security, and guaranteeing law and order we can no longer remain strictly statist. However, in regards to regulation, the capacity of existing institutional arrangements to monitor and control the plural policing landscape still raises many questions; this is however beyond the contours of this thesis. Equally, questions pertaining to legitimacy, effectiveness, equity, and human rights<sup>742</sup> will continue to draw vexed discussions and remain to be addressed in different plural policing context and policy.

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<sup>741</sup> For more on this see Fouchard, "A New Name for an Old Practice", Africa...also Rita Abrahamsen and Michael C. Williams, *Security Beyond the State: Private Security in International Politics*, (Cambridge University Press, 2011)

<sup>742</sup> Loader, "Plural Policing", 324.

## **Chapter Eight: Conclusion**

### **8.1. Recapitulating the Research Questions**

There is a long intellectual history of studying the police and vigilante practice as separate, the police as state (formal) and vigilante groups as non-state (informal).<sup>743</sup> My study contributes to the work of scholars who have in recent times studied vigilantism as constitutive of policing. This is situated within the argument that across the globe, many policing systems are plural and when we focus only on the police, a lot of policing practice is left out. At the beginning of this thesis, I established the fact that the policing landscape of contemporary Nigerian society is plural. At the core of this plurality is the Nigerian Police Force. However, as the concept of plurality suggest other actors constitute this plural policing system. The Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) represents one of the components of this present-day plurality. I have also argued that the VGN and the contemporary plural policing landscape should also be understood as the latest manifestation of a historical trajectory of plural policing. Therefore, the principal question of my inquiry is: To what extent can we account for the history of plural policing in Plateau State Nigeria? In accounting for this plurality through the chapters of my thesis, I sought to locate the origins of this plurality, and to understand the drivers and catalyst of the transformative dynamics across the decades. The question of who constitutes the policing actors was also of interest, I sought to document profiles of NAPF officers and members of the VGN. I was fascinated by how the category of these policing actors changed over time. I asked the question – to what extent can the socialisation of policing actors be accounted for? How have they been socialised? How have they responded to changing political and social contexts? My inquiry was also interested in the relationships between the police and other policing actors. The research problem is therefore not solely about understanding processes of state building, but also about notions and understandings of the state, through the lens of institutions of policing from a historical perspective.

Using selected local governments in Plateau State, central Nigeria as case studies my thesis, has provided insight on our understanding of policing and plurality, authority and society, socialisation and violence, and institutionalisation. To conduct this research I have deployed a historical methodology, to specifically account for the origins and changing forms of plural policing. To examine the contemporary manifestations of plural policing, selected

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<sup>743</sup> In a Nigerian context, my Doctoral project is the first extended historical study that attempts to study the police and vigilante groups as constitutive components of a plural policing system.

ethnographic methods are used to complement the historical method of data collection. I have categorised my major findings and core arguments into four main themes, namely: institutionalisation: macro and micro dynamics; socialisation, violence and ambivalence; on plurality and policing; and authority, society and policing. I finish with a consideration of the comparative dynamics that I draw from my major arguments.

## **8.2. Institutionalisation: Macro and Micro Dynamics**

The theme of institutionalisation relates to how I have situated plural policing within a diachronic logic, this is complemented by the extended case method, which has been deployed to show the interface between macro and micro dynamics. In specific terms, this relates to the exploration of the historical relationships and interactions between the macro and micro levels of the state and the practices of its agents across the different epochs. In regards to the first epoch, (1945-1969) I have argued that the plural policing system of present-day Plateau State Nigeria originates from the colonial government's indirect rule policy that transformed the chieftaincy institutions of the then Plateau Province. I describe and analyse a direct historical trajectory to the institutionalisation of paramountcy in the chieftaincy institutions of the Plateau Province of Nigeria from the early 1940s to the late 1950s this culminates with the dismantling of the former Native Authority Police in the late 1960s. The macro-micro interface of this period studied the dynamics of implementing indirect rule. Studying relations between Lagos (the national government), Kaduna (the northern regional government), Jos (the provincial government) Shendam (the divisional administration) and the various native administration headquarters across the division revealed several interesting insights about how the colonial administration operated particularly as it concerned the administration of policing at and between the different levels of colonial administration. For instance, I have shown how the divisional officers, chiefs, and the native authority administration became empowered as the result of the regional government's mistrust and tense relationship with Lagos. The regional northern government particularly during the tenure of Palmer, and also with succeeding governors were very suspicious of the Nigeria Police Force and feared that they may usurped the powers and authority of the traditional rulers at the local level, and by doing so undermine the regional government. The consequent impact of this regional policy was the strengthening of the chiefs and the NAPF.

The second epoch is defined by the 1970s, and became manifest in the 1980s, critical also are the years preceding the 1970s. I argue that there were key events at the macro level, which had a profound impact on the micro level and thus transformed the history of plural policing. A recompilation of the main instance of this interface during this epoch is instructive. In 1966, the military took power and terminated Nigeria's first republic. I show in my thesis how the major beneficiaries of the emergence of the military were a fluid coalition of the opposition parties during the first republic. These were the opposition leaders whose members, and on occasion personally suffered in the hands of the NAPF during the first republic. Therefore, it was not a coincidence that a federal military government, with the likes of Chief Obafemi Awolowo, Mallam Aminu Kano, Chief Anthony Enahoro, and Joseph Tarka as federal commissioners (ministers) disbanded the NAPF, and laid the foundations for stripping traditional rulers of all constitutional powers over local administration by the mid-1970s. The implication of this as I have argued, was that traditional rulers had to devise creative means of maintaining local relevance in order to re-assert some semblance of influence and authority. Again, this was a direct response to the Nigerian government's policy in the mid-1970s to reform local government. It is within this context that we are to understand the re-emergence of plural policing at the local level, only that this time in the form of community vigilante groups. The preceding narrative of these epochs (1<sup>st</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup>) is what my thesis has contributed to the literature on the history of plural policing in Nigeria. The concluding part of the second epoch however is already well established in the literature on plural policing particularly the study of vigilantism. This narrative describes and analyses how the Nigerian government at federal and state level following a severe implementation of austerity the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in the 1980s as recommended by the Bretton Woods institutions mobilised traditional rulers to organise vigilante groups at the local level. I show how the policy was initiated and sold at the level of government as a component of community policing, at the local level it was merely a continuation of plural policing with the blessings and support of the government. Therefore, if there is a major transformative actor in this process of institutionalising plural policing it is the chieftaincy institution. The traditional rulers therefore constitute mediating agents responsible for causing a diachronic link between the phenomenon of the NAPF and contemporary vigilantism.

I have argued that the third epoch of this process is defined by Nigeria's return to civil rule in 1999. In this context I show how the emergence of the VGN as a present-day manifestation of plural policing agents, is equally directly and indirectly midwived by the state. In the thesis, I

show this at the macro and micro levels. For instance, my analysis of how the Nigerian government's presidential retreat on security endorsed and supported vigilante practice as a compliment to the NPF encouraged the VGN to further collaborate and cooperate with the police. Another important point I analyse in the thesis at this macro level is the official recognition granted to the VGN by virtue of the group's registration with Nigeria's Corporate Affairs Commission. At the micro level, I have described the cooperation and collaboration of the police and the VGN, this further legitimises VGN policing as part of the policing system. The implications of my engagement with this theme of institutionalisation, brings two points to the fore. First, it underlines the active involvement of the Nigerian state in the process. Secondly, it has provided evidence that contrast with the arguments that have advanced plural policing as a function of state failure or weakness.

### **8.3. Socialisation, Violence and Ambivalence**

I have argued in this thesis that in historical and contemporary context violence is constitutive of policing practice across Nigeria. This refers to the everyday use of violence by the NAPF, and by the vigilante groups that succeeded the NAPF. Furthermore, violence as a tool of plural policing is a product of a particular form of policing socialisation. I have also argued that the earliest and most profound influence on policing<sup>744</sup> has been the influence of the Nigerian military. This process of a military socialisation of policing has its origins in Nigeria's war history<sup>745</sup>. It is very clear that from the NAPF to the VGN, the alternative policing structures that have engaged in policing alongside the NPF have absorbed war veterans and retired military men, mostly drawn from the rank and file of the Nigerian army in quite large numbers. Secondly, Nigeria's several decades of military rule in the post-colonial period has equally created a militarised police force. Consequently, the influence of the military on plural policing actors has also been midwifed by the socialisation that vigilante groups received from the police following the implementation of structural adjustment programme. The implication of this is the realisation that the Nigerian military, particularly the army has had an instrumental role in the socialisation of groups, and individuals who make claim to providing policing services and the maintenance of law and order. The main point that emerges therefore is that violent practices of policing actors are adopted and imbibed not just from a history of the formation and development of state security institutions, but also influenced by wider Nigerian political and social history. As I have previously argued

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<sup>744</sup> This refers to state police and vigilante alike.

<sup>745</sup> This refers to participation by Nigerian conscripts in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> world wars, and the Nigerian civil war. Over the historical period, a large number of NAPF and vigilante group recruits were drawn from amongst war veterans.



there is domestication, legitimisation, and an institutionalisation of violence; there is a societal acceptance tacit and complacent of the use of violence as part of policing practice. My contribution on policing violence adds the specific context of the former Plateau Province and the current Plateau State to the existing literature. In all the literature, the NAPF has come in for very scathing criticism. As I have also shown this is not in doubt as even the former NAPF police officers accept some of these charges levelled against them. For example, Danladi Tanglar and Rufai Abubakar for instance did recount the role the NAPF played during the first republic. They talked about how the then ruling party in northern Nigeria, the NPC used the NAPF to rig elections by providing security while boxes would be stuffed, intimidate the opposition candidates by sometimes arresting them on fabricated and flimsy offences, and violently brutalise supporters of the opposition party thereby securing electoral victory for the ruling party.

My departure from existing literature is however the argument that NAPF brutalisation and oppression on behalf of the NAs during the colonial period and on behalf of the NPC during the first republic does not tell the whole story. The story of the NAPF is equally a story of ambivalence. To what extent is it accurate to argue that the NAPF as an institution of colonial policing solely engaged in the oppression and suppression of the people? The fact that the evidence that suggest the contrast of this is minimal compared to the dominant narrative, is not a reason I would argue, to absolutely ignore it. As a rule, the exception is equally worthy of our inquiry. This informs my methodological decision to seek out and interview former NAPF officers, not the senior ranking officers, but rather the regular members of the NAPF. I have suggested that to understand the phenomenon of the NAPF, and plural policing in general we need the analytical category of ambivalence. The realisation that NAPF officers, also engaged in ‘proper policing’, also rendered services to their communities, engaged in mundane everyday practice of policing and on rare occasions did defy orders of chiefs, when they considered this illegal and not in their interest, provides the evidence for these arguments. This I argue makes ambivalence a worthy analytical category in our understanding of the NAPF. Furthermore, this category is still valid for present day analysis.

It is important to conclusively remind ourselves that, the analysis of this thesis is not uninformed of the fact that in several instances, drawing from its colonial history the NPF still is perceived and related too by many Nigerians as an institution of the state that oppresses and

suppresses and should be feared.<sup>746</sup> There are cases of the police using excessive force against citizens, including extra-judicial killings reported in Nigerian media with such regularity.<sup>747</sup> As my analysis of the vigilante groups of the SAP era and the VGN has clearly demonstrated misconduct and unscrupulousness have continued to exist side by side with virtuous, service delivery oriented policing. It is a duality that is inherently constitutive of policing practice, and the job of the researcher as it were in this case is not to insist on drawing a conclusion that constrains us into taking an either/or position. Ambiguity, in other words, needs to be defined as one of the core concepts of statehood and public authority...the state comes into being as a process of negotiation and differentiation.<sup>748</sup>

Here I would agree with Owen, who in concluding his ethnographic study of the Nigeria Police Force points out what he feels is missing from analyses on Nigeria. He argues that alongside dysfunction, there is a second viewpoint that when we look in with more rigour and effort we realise, that there is:

...the functional state whose image fails to make it past the dysfunctionalist filter applied to Nigeria by those who focus exclusively on collapse, conflict, injustice and abjection. This miscarriage is not only the function of an orientalisng gaze: Nigerians too love to lament the everyday horrors, failures and injustices produced by the system. But to allow ourselves to be carried away by that is to misunderstand the nature of what we are looking at, ...when we reach a little way inside the state, we can find both oppression and working understandings, corruption and professionalism, domination and interpenetration, rational institutionalism and copious informalisation, authority and negotiation. Even the opportunities for abusing such a system are embedded in its performance of its role; dysfunction and function are fully intertwined.<sup>749</sup>

While policing by force has continued to be a constitutive feature of policing practice, particularly the practice of the VGN that I observed while conducting this study I have equally shown within my thesis how they have also imbibed civil practices. This has been informed by their quest for social legitimacy and longevity of practice. VGN members for instance are aware that the Nigerian state through the police still reserves the right and might to proscribe and dismantle vigilante practice, as was the case albeit for a brief period in some parts of Plateau State in the 1990s. In understanding how citizens encounter the state we also

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<sup>746</sup> Olonisakin, Ikpe, and Badong, *The Future of Security and Justice for the Poor*, 10.

<sup>747</sup> It should be noted of course that this is by no means strictly a Nigerian problem, as recent events in the United States have shown a manifestation of police brutality on citizens, with several fatal cases.

<sup>748</sup> Poppe, "The Power of the uniform", 31.

<sup>749</sup> Owen, *The Nigerian Police Force: an institutional ethnography*, 357.

understand how the state works. In contrast to the state that produces, abjection is the state that actually delivers, the state that works. This is informed by the understanding of constituted practices of the state bureaucracy and practices of bureaucrats.<sup>750</sup> For instance we may understand how the police and vigilante members (as bureaucrats) deal with the laws they are governed by.<sup>751</sup> We are able to understand how officials negotiate formal rules. As a Divisional Police Officer in one of the local governments within my study area noted – “We have policing as law and policing as practice. If you want to talk about policing in the law and rulebooks, you go talk to my Commissioner. However if you want to talk about policing as practice, then I can help you.”<sup>752</sup> In other words, state practice is not strictly, what obtains in the legal frameworks, it is equally the practices that individual actors engage with on a daily basis. Within a given social context, state-practice is conceived as a back and forth mediated negotiation.

#### **8.4. On Plurality and Policing**

I have examined the transformation of plural policing by focusing on micro narratives. In my exploration of plural policing it did emerge quite early that the best place to understand the relations between the police and other policing actors is at the local level. My approach has been to understand policing practice from the lens of those who actually deliver it, in this case the NAPF and vigilante groups. On one hand, this means understanding the practice of the NAPF and vigilante groups as it relates to plural policing during British colonial rule, when the NAPF were active and the period from the late 1970s to the 1990s, which tracks the emergence and acceptance of vigilante groups as part of the policing landscape. Another component of this micro narrative approach is the insight gained from our understanding of the relationship between the NAPF/vigilante groups and the Nigerian Police Force. Relying on profiles generated from biographic interviews I have attempted to present a history of plural policing. This is in contrast to some existing literature,<sup>753</sup> where the focus of study remains at the macro level. There is not one can contribute to the understanding of phenomenon, when the researcher does not talk to those involved. Methodological, I have proven yet again the viability and usefulness of oral testimony to the writing of history. To strictly rely on secondary material in the study of a phenomenon like policing the practice of which operates crucially at the local level, and further down to the individual, is to not

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<sup>750</sup> Bierschenk and Olivier De Sardan, *States at Work...*

<sup>751</sup> Marenin, Otwin. “Policing Nigeria: Control and Autonomy in the Exercise of Coercion.” *African Studies Review*, Vol.28, No.1, 1985: 76-7876.

<sup>752</sup> Interview DPO Shendam, LGA, 10.10.2012.

<sup>753</sup> See for example Ahire, *Imperial Policing...*

understand the dynamics that drive policing in its plurality. My core point here is that macro analysis of policing while important in presenting and understanding grand trends ultimately provides a partial and insufficient analysis of what transpired, particularly at the local level. Therefore, to have a complete picture and understanding of the major processes (themes) at play, Institutionalisation, Plurality, Socialisation, and the changing dynamics around the functioning of Authority – the micro narrative is critical. This is by no means discounting macro dynamics, as I have shown in chapter five of the thesis, the macro level is important, but the picture is only complete when we extend the analysis to the micro narrative. Analysis that focuses on macro dynamics, I would suggest are not necessarily wrong, they are simply incomplete.

As I noted in the methodological section on scope and periodization, across the historical period studied 1945-2015 three definitive epochs can be delineated: 1945-1969, 1980-1990, 1999-2015. The first epoch captures the plural policing landscape that is constituted by the Nigerian police force and the NAPF. The second epoch is constituted by the NPF and community based vigilante groups. The third epoch as I have studied it focuses on the NPF and the VGN. There are comparative similarities and differences we can draw from these three epochs. A clear similarity is the role of traditional rulers as a constant authority is the process of supervision and oversight of the policing actors, off course specifically referring here to the NAPF, community vigilante groups, and the VGN. I have shown however, how the role of the traditional rulers has also changed. Traditional rulers were the fulcrum of native authority administration from 1945-1969, the local mobilising agents for community vigilante policing during the SAP era, and the responsibility of recommending and vetting recruits in the present-day VGN. Furthermore, traditional rulers have remained a key factor in the trajectory of plural policing. However, while the NAPF had a more coherent authority and were mainly answerable to the chiefs and emirs, the community vigilante groups and the VGN are answerable to multiple authorities the chief, local government officials and the local divisional police all make claim to being the authority that supervise VGN practice in the local government area. The organisation and structure has also varied across the historical period of study. The NAPF and the community vigilante groups were mainly community based. The NAPF restricted their policing work within the jurisdiction of the Native Authority, and the community vigilante groups were limited to their immediate community. The VGN in attempt to be part of the broader policing system emerged with an organogram that has a vertical hierarchy from the commander general, based in Kaduna down to the state

and local government. While the VGN may not have the same command and control in police practice, they do make effort to show a semblance of structure and organisation.

### **8.5. Authority, Society and Policing**

When an institution authorises, sanctions or validates certain rights, the respect or observance of these rights by people, powerful in clout or numbers, simultaneously constitutes recognition of the authority of that particular institution.<sup>754</sup>

It is on this basic, yet important premise that I have understood and deployed the notion of authority. Embedded in this conception is the communicative form of command and obedience, particularly within a context where having a plurality of policing actors, does suggest a plurality of authorities. The question was to understand how agents of plural policing have managed to acquire such authority, and on what basis do people accept such an authority. I have argued that the logic of this pluralism of authority is best captured in the relationship between the VGN and the police on one hand, and the VGN and their communities on the other. The VGN members are legitimated by practices that are in some cases emblematic, but also prominently explicit. The VGN therefore constitute a policing authority. Therefore, the discussion in the thesis on the VGN's legitimacy does not just follow how they act; also important is the understanding of how they are governed. As I have noted previously, Vigilante oversight in the contemporary context reveals how different forms, multiple authorities, govern them. I have shown in the thesis how traditional rulers, local government officials and the police are all involved in the business of contemporary vigilante oversight.

Through the lens of the VGN, I have examined how state and non-state policing actors have interacted, through cooperation and negotiation, I returned to my earlier arguments and show the contemporary manifestation should be seen as the latest stage of a process of institutionalising plural policing. Again, in regards to linking the forgone analysis to the micro level plurality, my main point is a departure from arguments where vigilante groups are shown to reject the politico-legal authority of the state.<sup>755</sup> At the point of their formation and initial stages of evolving we may have observed a dynamic that suggest how vigilante groups simultaneously reinforce and weaken different dimensions of statehood. When we however study vigilantism over a historical period, we also realise that institutionalisation of plural

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<sup>754</sup> Lund, *Twilight Institutions*, 3.

<sup>755</sup> Harnischfeger, "Ethnicity, Religion and the Failure of Common Law", 51-78.

policing creates scenarios where the cooperative dynamic of the relationship between the state and non-state policing actors is more dominant, and less competitive.<sup>756</sup>

We also notice how the relationship between the state and plural policing formations is politicised. This dynamics can be drawn from historical epochs studied but also observed in contemporary politics. In chapter seven, I showed how the immediate outgone government of Jonah Jang sought to engage the VGN in Plateau State through the lens of ‘identity politics.’ The administration of governor Jang did not just decline to support the VGN more damaging the administration actively pursued a programme of factionalising the VGN. Comparatively, the thesis shows how the politicisation of plural policing is not new. The role which the NAPF played during the first republic, specifically its functioning as a tool of the administration to suppress opposition groups can be used here as an instructive instance.

### **8.6. On a Comparative Note**

What broader implications do these arguments have for the wider concerns and comprehension of this thesis? I would suggest that they should be read as logical outcomes produced by a history of socialisation, and institutionalisation and have been midwived by interaction and relationships characterised by violence, plurality and authority. The implications of this are first on a conceptual level. I would also suggest that they offer us insights into the understanding of the state and its everyday operations. They provide a new perspective into our understanding of vigilantism, and on a more general note plural policing in Nigeria. They also provide us with a platform for a comparative understanding of vigilantism in a local Nigerian context and as a global phenomenon. This point on comparison, as it relates to the specific phenomenon of vigilantism, needs further extrapolation. In regards to comparison within the Nigeria context, I specifically refer to how my study compares with the existing literature. In the literature review, preceding the conceptual framework I was interested in comparison in regards to questions, approach, and arguments of specific scholars. My point in this concluding chapter however, is the extent to which my study constitutes a departure from some studies on policing, vigilantism, and our understandings of the Nigerian state.

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<sup>756</sup> Andrea Kirschner, “Putting Out the Fire with Gasoline? Violence Control in “Fragile” States: A Study of Vigilantism in Nigeria” in *Control of Violence: Historical and International Perspectives on Violence in Modern Societies*, Wilhelm Heitmeyer, Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Stefan Malthaner, Andrea Kirschner eds., (Springer, 2011) 563-592.

According to Bierschenk and Oliver De Sardin,<sup>757</sup> to understand the workings of the state we need to study not just the apparatus of state, and the policies of the bureaucracy but also the practices of the bureaucrat. In this sense we see what the colonial policy was, and to be sure colonial policy therefore was often not what came from London; rather it was what the bureaucrat deemed best for his administering of the colony. This was the case with Lugard, Cameron, and Palmer.

Furthermore, it was not limited to the Governor General, it also applied to the Residents in charge of the Provinces and the District Officers at the divisional level. This process continued after independence as the bureaucrats who inherited state power continued to impact on the processes and trajectories of local administration. This study has also added the interesting dynamic of bureaucratic rivalries and how this influenced the historical process. The colonial administration in the colony was a government made of a collection of individuals and groups at different levels, all with their varying interests and preferences, and sometimes these collided and clashed. Fred Cooper, drawing from his studies of colonial West Africa, asserts "...colonial elites did not always agree on which direction they should lean. Among colonizing elites – even if they shared a conviction of superiority – tensions often erupted between those who wanted to save souls or civilize natives and those who saw the colonized as objects to be used and discarded at will."<sup>758</sup> In our case I have shown how there were colonial officers who preferred to have the NPF in charge and having oversight functions to all other forms of policing, including the NAPF. In contrast, I have also discussed other colonial officers who preferred to leave all forms of local policing to the emirs and chiefs. In sum, we find colonial officers who were convinced that the only way to entrench indirect rule at the local level was from above, and those who preferred to use any semblance of local authority, allowing the chiefs to institute colonial rule and exercise power from below.

Now returning to the reasons of establishing NA police, Tamuno has argued that the NA police were established in order to have "better police forces to assist in the maintenance of law and order, the preservation of public safety and the prevention, detection and punishment of crime."<sup>759</sup> In other words, the rise of crime and public disorder, characterised by waves of political instability, constituted the core thrust and the primary purpose for expanding policing

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<sup>757</sup> Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan, eds. *States at Work: dynamics of African bureaucracies*, (Leiden: Brill, 2014)

<sup>758</sup> Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 24.

<sup>759</sup> Tamuno, *The Police*, 93-94.

practice. Ahire in a critique of Tamuno draws our attention rather to the objectives of supplementing various colonial police forces and constabularies in buttressing colonial authority.<sup>760</sup> Furthermore, according to Ahire, the NA police “...did not and could not maintain public safety, given their human and material inadequacies. Instead they performed duties which enabled the colonial authority to penetrate the remotest corners of the colonial social formation.”<sup>761</sup> I agree with Ahire that the NA police were established primarily as a response to insufficient numbers of colonial police officers and the colonial state required an initiative to complement the existing policing structures, all in a quest to extend colonial authority to all nooks and crannies of the Provinces. Concerning Ahire’s critique of Tamuno’s explanation, I would contend that this arises because Tamuno does not critically treat what is actually meant by ‘maintaining law and order’ or the kinds of ‘crime’ the NA police were expected to ‘prevent, and detect,’ and ‘punish’. If we understand the breaking of law and order as subverting the smooth running of the colonial state, protesting against or refusing to pay tax – actions that undermined the authority of the colonial state, then Tamuno’s argument would be convincing. Mbaku and Kimenyi take the point further where he argued “In order to assign the colonial police the role of crime fighter, one would have to reclassify resistance to domination, subjugation, and exploitation as a crime. Only in this context can one view the colonial police force as a crime fighting entity.”<sup>762</sup> This is however not problematised in Tamuno’s analysis. Here we are therefore left with a given reading of crime. To suggest that the reality, or for certain that the colonial state, its laws, and the agents of state were put in place for the service of the colonial peoples is to disregard what we already know.<sup>763</sup> Again, in reference to Mamdani’s notion of ‘decentralised despotism’, the NA police were established to validate the authority of chiefs and emirs, a tool for enforcing their rule. Rotimi<sup>764</sup> has elaborated on this, making the point that the NA police were established to among other things serve as symbols of the authority of their employers, particularly in areas like the Plateau Province where the NA system was a major modification of the pre-existing political structure. The fact is surely that the police did different things. Yes, they upheld the authority of chiefs, emirs, and colonial officers, even where these were unjust, but that does

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<sup>760</sup> Ahire, *Imperial Policing*, 48.

<sup>761</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

<sup>762</sup> John M. Mbaku and Mwangi S. Kimenyi “Rent Seeking and Policing in Colonial Africa” in Toyin Falola (Ed.) *The Dark Webs: Perspectives on Colonialism in Africa*, (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2005), 173-174.

<sup>763</sup> For sustained analysis on the impact of colonial policies on the former Plateau province see, Mangwat, *A History of Class Formation...for a range of colonial policies and impacts on a broader Northern Nigerian scale*, see Yakubu, et al, *Northern Nigeria: A Century of Transformation...*

<sup>764</sup> Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State*, 169.



not mean they would not investigate murder, theft, and other crimes that broke the colonial laws that had been put in place.

Turning to literature on the history of policing, I start with Ahire's argument. I contend that he relies too much on the policy and the structure as his basis of analysing the practice of the institution. While I find concurrence in his analyses of the colonial objectives of establishing the NA police, his dismissal of the potential and capacity of the NA police to provide policing services for the people because of their "human and material inadequacies" does a grave injustice to the careers of former NA police like Danladi Tanglar and Mallam Rufai. According to Ahire, "in colonial Nigeria, police recourse to legal procedures did not earn them the image of an impartial and professional force. In the first place, state law was foreign, illegitimate and antagonistic to indigenous laws and customs,"<sup>765</sup> therefore, police work could not be legitimised by it. While I recognise this dynamic, and I document it in my thesis, I argue that seeing policing only in this logic does not account for dynamics that are more ambiguous. Here I am not in total agreement with Ahire. We understand the police's core responsibility not only as articulated in the law but also as experienced in the practice of policing. I agree that colonial law as it was articulated had objectives of keeping the people in line; to suppress all forms of civil unrest - in other words, to protect the state from the people. If the civil public suffers from a crisis of acceptance, it is there to be taken from but not to be given too. The police as an institution of this civil public are seen as an institution to avoid, and it does not belong to the people. The origins of its foundation and the experience of its practice have unquestionably led to a culture of distrust by the people. This creates employment and police officers without policing, coercion and force without legitimacy. However, policing practice was not restricted to the laws of colonial oppression and suppression. What is revealed with an extensive study of the micro processes of plural policing is practice that is characterised by several interpretations. This complication and ambivalence are lacking in studies of policing like Tamuno and Ahire's. Almost straddling two extremes, with Tamuno all interpretations are conservatively administratively understood and Ahire on the other hand with a hard-hitting Marxist radical lens.<sup>766</sup> In other words, as negative as the image of the police is, it is yet difficult to imagine Nigerian society without the police. As much as they are the harbingers of trouble and 'palaver', they are also responsible for a semblance of stability in large parts of the country.

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<sup>765</sup> Ibid., 30

<sup>766</sup> These arguments are developed Tamuno, *The Police in Modern Nigeria...*, and Ahire, *Imperial Policing...* In fact, Ahire's main point of critique throughout his monograph is Tamuno.

It is thus misleading to disregard or dismiss the NAPF. The forgone analysis and narratives show that they were taken quite seriously. Tanglar and Rufai's careers in the NAPF buttress my argument that the NPF men were more than security appendages of the local chiefs, blindly serving colonial interest. This is what is gained when such institutions are studied from micro perspectives. The policies and governmental directives that established this institution were without doubt coercive. There is no doubt that such objectives considered the security of the colonial state and processes to maximise the economic potential of the colony above all else. It is, however, inadequate and erroneous to suggest this and leave the argument at that, particularly with the accounts and understandings unearthed about the interface between macro and micro processes. Marenin<sup>767</sup> situates police practice in Nigeria within an instrumentalist lens – as a tool for the protection of the state, its agents and their interest. This is more convincing and provides a more nuanced take in contrast to Ahire. Marenin's main point is in recognising that the police as individuals and as a collective, while in the employment of the state and executing the directives of state agents also harbour their own interests and the required agency to pursue these interests. Accordingly, Marenin argues that:

Class power and class rule may be visualized as chain of control linking the ruling class (and its factions) to the state, to the agency and to the personnel who ultimately carry out decisions. Only if state agency and personnel transmit ruling class preferences into policy without distortion that is without inserting their own interest only if the state and its agents are neutral is policy implemented in the interests of the ruling class. Policy outcomes reflect the tension between control (the capacity of the ruling class to shape actions to its desires) and autonomy (the capacity of the state and its agents to resist control in order to promote their own interests)...the police are a tool for class rule, yet they are also actors in their own rights and interest.<sup>768</sup>

Ahire seems to have examined an institution that lasted for more than four decades with a lens that strictly focused on macro dynamics. It is interesting to realise that he did not talk to any former NA police officers or individuals who lived and experienced NA policing in forming his opinions on the institution. His analysis therefore is deprived of the revealing empirical details that help to inform this study and other studies.<sup>769</sup> Of particular note is Rotimi's work on the NA and LG police in the then northern and southwestern Nigeria. Rotimi gives a

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<sup>767</sup>Marenin, "Policing Nigeria", *African Studies Review*, 73-93.

<sup>768</sup> *Ibid.*, 74.

<sup>769</sup> For example Rotimi, *The Police in a Federal State...*

balanced analysis,<sup>770</sup> as he does not just emphasise the failings of the NA police. Relying on personal interviews and revealing archival documents, he profiles and discusses individual cases from the Sokoto, Borno, and Kano NAPF in the north and the LG police of Ibadan Province in the southwest<sup>771</sup> and shows how the NA police did achieve some measure of success in crime control. In sum, the NA police were indeed used by politicians and there were several cases of the NA police themselves committing crimes,<sup>772</sup> but they rose to the task on occasion and did provide policing services to the people. As Marenin, again, aptly notes "...the police may deliver services people need in times of duress or emergency and provide the sense of security and predictability necessary for them to engage in routine behaviour. Yet the police may also be the repressive organ of state rule, the means by which the lives and safety of citizens are placed at the mercy of anonymous, bureaucratic, and personalistic discretion."<sup>773</sup>

The institution of NA policing went through different stages and processes, and over time the composition of membership changed, as did its structure, functions, and practice. The institution was not static, as is clear from the above profiles of NA police officers. This is not to claim that there was a linear progression or that the NAPF continued to improve in its workings and got better at it. Kemi Rotimi<sup>774</sup> has showed in convincing detail how politicians in Nigeria's First Republic used the NA police to harass and intimidate their opponents. On this point, he concludes that:

...the ruling elite used the NA police as a leverage to maintain a fragile political power. It was possible to enlist the support of the NA police because the operational control of the forces constrained their ability to resist misuse; also because some among the police were corrupt, ambitious and opportunistic. The actions of the police were unpopular and when the opportunity came, the people unleashed their wrath on them as agents of governments that they detested.<sup>775</sup>

The former NA police accept this point argued by Rotimi. They were honest to admit that they were used by the politicians to harass political opponents and do the bidding of the ruling party. However, as I recounted in his profile, Danladi Tanglar though also talks of the exceptional cases where NA police rejected the orders of the chiefs. The improvements

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<sup>770</sup> Ibid., Specifically see chapters five and six.

<sup>771</sup> Ibid., 188-189.

<sup>772</sup> Ibid., 190-192.

<sup>773</sup> Marenin, "Policing Nigeria", *African Studies Review*, 75.

<sup>774</sup> Ibid., 129-168.

<sup>775</sup> Ibid., 168.

experienced in the workings of the NA police in the Plateau Province in the 1950s was specifically connected to the enrolment of Middle school graduates as Danladi Tanglar<sup>776</sup>, Ali Dakshang<sup>777</sup>, and Benjamin Voncir<sup>778</sup> emphasised. Another important development at the time as I have argued in chapter five was the people's acceptance of paramouncy following the Macpherson initiative that recognised minority groups rather than assembling groups into federated NAs as was the case with previous policies.<sup>779</sup>

I outlined how my work complements in some cases and disputes existing literature on vigilantism in Nigeria. My thesis is the first to study the VGN on such a scale. Some of the earlier studies on the Bakassi Boys, the Oodu'a People's Congress (OPC), and the Hisbah (Sharia Police) had at their core, examples of vigilantism that is driven and situated within the social formation of identity. Another popular theme was the conception that understood vigilantism in the logic of contesting the authority of the state.

Again Peter Ekeh's formulation of 'the two publics' is instructive. Ekeh delineates the civic and the primordial publics and identified the enduring unease between loyalty to ethnic group and loyalty to the Nigerian state.<sup>780</sup> The logic for the mobilisation into the VGN is beyond the identity logic of mobilisation we find in other forms of vigilantism in post 1999 Nigeria. Mobilisation in these cases is expressed through religion and ethnicity, as is the case with Murray Last<sup>781</sup> and Adamu<sup>782</sup> on the Hisba in Kano, and Fourchard<sup>783</sup> and Akinleye<sup>784</sup> on the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) found in southwestern Nigeria. Secondly, and in line with one of my core arguments; the VGN which emerged from the historical process of institutionalisation of plural policing actually supports the state and its agencies, they are not resisting the state's authority, they do not articulate their practice as a form of protest or resistance. Therefore, while the Bakassi Boys, the OPC and the Hisbah were emerging on to the scene the VGN was being registered, consequently the structures, organisation, and practices of vigilantism were being further transformed with the active approval and involvement of the state. I am in agreement with arguments that have cautioned us from

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<sup>776</sup>Danladi Tanglar interviewed by Jimam Lar, Jos, 12.01.2015.

<sup>777</sup> Ali Dakshang interviewed by Jimam Lar, Dadur-Langtang North, 07.10.2012.

<sup>778</sup> Benjamin Voncir interviewed by Jimam Lar, Langtang, 10.01.2015.

<sup>779</sup> Mangvwat, *A History of Class Formation*, 176-177.

<sup>780</sup> Ekeh, 'Colonialism and the two publics', 107.

<sup>781</sup> See Last, 'The Search for Security' *Africa*, 41-63,

<sup>782</sup> Adamu, 'Gender, Hisba and the Enforcement of Morality', *Africa...*

<sup>783</sup> Fourchard, 'A New Name for an Old Practice' *Africa...*

<sup>784</sup> Akinleye, 'Ethnic Militancy and National Stability' *African Affairs*, 623-640.

always concluding that the increasing prominence of non-state security actors is an automatic feature of state decline in power and authority.<sup>785</sup>

What has emerged from my study reveals that the vigilante group I have studied (the VGN) does not comply with the dynamics of ethnic and religious category as the basis or the logic of its mobilisation. While it may be pointed out that, the formation, and its current leadership in most of northern Nigeria is converged around a Hausa group dynamic, its membership is diverse and does represent the larger heterogeneity of society. Vigilante group members emerge as a social grouping because of their shared experience, where we establish that several VGN members have a common background. There is a commonality that emerges because of shared attributes, these common attributes were made clear when we analysed the profiles of a considerable number of vigilante members as a collective. Before joining the VGN these are young men who fall into a category that Pratten has described as having experienced the “rugged life.”<sup>786</sup> This brings in a second dimension, where we establish how vigilante membership is constituted by societal rejects who find redemption in being members of the VGN. The VGN provides an ostensible entry point to society, the recognition as respected and recognised members of the community. Here we refer to notions of the political economy of vigilantism as a form of socialisation. I presented individual cases where traditional local leaders also double as chairmen of local government vigilante groups. Vigilantism is another means of earning a livelihood, membership bestows status and respect, and it provides protection.

What also emerges and resonates from these practices is how vigilantism functions in helping us understand the creation and monitoring of, for lack of a better word ‘policing’ group boundaries. Vigilante socialisation as I demonstrate in chapter six, speaks to the very idea of identity creation ‘identification’ and the more active dynamic of belonging, it creates actual and potential visions of an ‘us’ and ‘them’ logic. Then there is connectedness, understood as the relational tie that links individual vigilante members through their everyday practice. For the members of the VGN, they constitute a critical component of the policing system, distinct from general forms of community policing. These boundaries could be either socio-cultural or even political, ranging from the sectarian - ethnic, religious and community or moral – good people and bad people, criminals and non-criminals. Under underlying functions of

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<sup>785</sup> For more on this see Abrahamsen, and Williams, *Security Beyond the State...*

<sup>786</sup> For more on this see, Pratten, “The “rugged life” 84-104.

belonging, which I find, quite illuminating from my observation is the fact that despite all these boundaries, actual and imagined, we are still largely dealing with youth policing youth.<sup>787</sup> The further question that does not necessarily fall into my consideration is to what extent we can draw more from studying vigilantism in regards to generational shifts and conflicts and the study of inequality.

My second comparative point relates to a more general comment on vigilantism as a global phenomenon. This relates to what we can learn on a general comparative level. These are insights that have meaning across cultural, national, and historical boundaries. I have related my thesis to global debates on vigilantism and policing. There are two points I have engaged. Firstly, the arguments that suggest that contemporary cases of vigilantism in Africa are solely a manifestation of 'state failure', and the arguments where vigilante groups reject the politico-legal authority of the state. These I argue fail to recognise the role that the state is already playing in sanctioning and legitimating non-state actors for the public good. Secondly, it is also important to consider cases of flawed comparison. Here, I refer to instances where even when scholars attempt to provide global comparisons (north south), the basis of such are flawed. An example is analyses that compare contemporary African cases with 19th and early 20th century American vigilantism. I argue that when we attempt comparative studies, the temporalities of our comparative contexts are as important as the geographic spread. The objective overall consists of resisting the temptation to argue for an African exception, this means I attempt to draw comparative conclusions that situate contemporary vigilantism in Nigeria as a reference point for understanding emerging global dynamics.

With every case study, our understanding is first based on a particular context. In every context, there are specific factors responsible for the emergence and development of vigilante policing. Some are historical, others more recent and contemporary. In my case, the historical phenomenon is the transformation of the chieftaincy institution, its emergence during colonial rule as the custodians of native authority rule and its dismantling during the early decades of post-colonial Nigeria. All of this contributed directly to the institutionalisation of vigilantism and plural policing in Plateau State. Therefore, every context will have its own specific factors, structures and dynamics. Nevertheless, it is also important to note that the manifestation of vigilant policing is not restricted to Plateau State, not particular to Nigeria, and not essentially an African phenomenon. This is a global phenomenon that manifest in

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<sup>787</sup> David Pratten makes this point in his analysis of vigilantism among the Anang, of Akwa Ibom state, southern Nigeria, for more see: Pratten, "Bodies of Power", 118-138.

varied context. Our task, challenge is to understand the varied socio-political dynamics that have led to the emergence of this practice in context as varied as Jos, and Kano, Nigeria; in Ghana and Tanzania; in the United States of America, Northern Ireland and in Russia. I would argue that a framework of questions as an entry point should guide such an approach. Whom are the vigilantes operating in the given context? What do they do? How long have they been doing it? What is their relationship with the state (the police)? Bierschenk and Olivier De Sardan capture the essence of this point; to render this clearly I quote them at length. They note that:

...the investigation of African and non-African forms of state-hood using the same analytical concepts and the same methods enables interesting comparisons. Certain forms of behaviour in the context of the state that are less pronounced in Europe, (and North America) and hence barely discernible, assume such proportions in Africa that they could not, as it were, escape the attention of either citizens or researchers...Hence it is relatively easier for a researcher to access them in Africa. They are also present in Europe (and North America) of course, but much better hidden or disguised.<sup>788</sup>

Such approach is a much-needed departure from Africanist scholarship that has seemed to be essentialist in its understanding of the complications and contradictions of statehood in Africa. In the same vein, Neubert in underlining the importance of a north-south comparative approach in fact nine years earlier than Bierschenk and De Sardan made the case in quite convincing terms. According to Neubert,

Most studies on Africa or other countries of the South are produced and read against the background of the industrialized countries. The problem is the missing transparency of what is being compared. In many cases, the industrialized countries are represented by an idealized image of themselves. It is surprising how little many Africanist know about poverty, change, political structures in the industrialized countries and the differences among these. We rarely find studies that pursue the same research questions in Africa and in an industrialized country. This non-transparent comparison between African reality and idealized North will always be biased against Africa.<sup>789</sup>

It can be argued that a comparative analysis of vigilante policing of context in Africa and Europe or America may shed light on several questions. As I have outlined in my framework of questions the necessary requirement to attempt such a comparison is the revealed fact that

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<sup>788</sup> Bierschenk and Olivier De Sardan, "Studying the Dynamics of African Bureaucracies" 3-33.

<sup>789</sup> Dieter Neubert, "Researching Africa South of the Sahara: A Sociologist's Perspective", in *Africa Spectrum*, vol.40. No.3, (2005), 431. (Accessed 09.04.2014).

the phenomenon does exist in these varying context. Therefore framing vigilante policing as a manifestation of failed states, or failed policing may describe a particular context, but it does not add to our objective to comment on the phenomenon on a global comparative context.

### **8.7. Implications for Security Sector Reform and Governance (SSRG)**

Given that vigilante groups are constitutive of the policing landscape in Nigeria it is therefore imperative to reassess the focus of all SSRG strategies as it relates to policing and vigilante practice. There are two SSRG measures in regards to the police. First, a coherent SSRG policy that incorporates vigilante groups, and Secondly, stakeholders (the police, local governments, traditional rulers) as I have previously shown in chapters 6 and 7, are collaborating in formulating and implementing oversight processes for supervising vigilante group practice.

There is a need to further shift the mind-set on how we conceptualise the security and justice sector, non-state security and justice actors need to be incorporated in all security sector reform strategies. It is important to have practical guidelines on why, when and how to engage with non-state security and justice actors. In order for vigilante groups to continue to function alongside state security institutions within a context of accountability and transparency, there is a place for clear-cut rules and regulations guiding their activities. A start would be to require all vigilante groups to register with relevant national and local authorities. The Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) is a good example of a vigilant group with state authorisation operating within a legal framework. The main objective of the VGN as I previously stated is to support state agencies (particularly the Nigerian Police) in combating crime and general maintenance of law and order in society. In order to ensure that vigilante groups operate within legal frameworks, respect human rights values, and other obligations, it is necessary to establish processes of monitoring and supervision. In other words, clear implementation and oversight processes must accompany legal frameworks regulating vigilante practice. In this sense the practice of licensing regimes for vigilante groups with provisions to renew such licenses periodically (annually) provided they meet certain requirements and minimum standards, becomes an interesting option to explore. Oversight mechanisms can be through traditional rulers, local government, local police, local civil society organisations, or the state government/Province.<sup>790</sup> It is possible to improve the

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<sup>790</sup> However, it must be noted that the mere passage of a law by the state without its proper implementation may cause more problems. An example of such a scenario is Nigeria's Anambra state where the Bakassi Boys (a vigilante group) was incorporated and regulated by the state. A law was passed by the state House of Assembly



effectiveness and accountability of vigilante groups with oversight, supervision and close monitoring. These are processes that go beyond legal frameworks; oversight mechanisms seeks to regulate practice and make sure vigilante groups are positively contributing to maintaining law and order, and ensuring the security of citizens and communities.

Instituting national, and local legal frameworks to guide and regulate the activities of traditional and customary leaders can have a major role in deepening accountability and making the activities of such institutions more transparent. The role of traditional rulers in local governance has been greatly curbed by the Nigerian government yet traditional rulers still enjoy varying levels of influence. The basis on which security law and order was defined and provided at the creation of the Nigerian state has changed. In recognising this transformative process, Olonisakin observes that we can find this change in how new and emerging voices have been influencing the security discourse and practice.<sup>791</sup> The form and structure of such groups varies from one community to another. It could be women organisations, NGOs, traditional rulers, vigilante groups and community development associations.

Conclusively, and returning to the Nigerian context in terms of the provision of security, and guaranteeing law and order, we can no longer remain strictly statist and non-statist. Plural policing is a phenomenon that is strikingly characterised by ambivalence. The recent active involvement of vigilante groups and hunter associations in the fight against insurgency in northeast Nigeria has created new dynamics of socialisation, institutionalisation and legitimisation of plural policing. However, in regards to regulation, the capacity of existing institutional arrangements to monitor and control the plural policing landscape still raises many questions; this is however beyond the contours of this thesis. Equally, questions pertaining to legitimacy, effectiveness, equity, and human rights<sup>792</sup> will continue to draw vexed discussions and research.

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to that effect providing for its funding, operations and relationship with the police. The group however, eventually got out of hand and had to be proscribed by the Nigerian government.

<sup>791</sup> Funmi Olonisakin, "Evolving Narratives of Security Governance in Africa", in *Women and Security Governance in Africa*, Funmi Olonisakin and Awino Okech, eds., (Pambazuka Press, 2011).

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## **Appendices**

1. VGN Certificate of Registration.
2. VGN Application for Enrolment (form).
3. VGN Membership Bio-Data (form).
4. VGN Members Nominal Roll.
5. VGN Membership Declaration (form).

CAC/6/INCT.



RC: 11,834

**CORPORATE AFFAIRS COMMISSION  
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA**

COMPANIES AND ALLIED MATTERS DECREE No.1, 1990  
(PART C—INCORPORATED TRUSTEES)

**CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION**

Of the Incorporated Trustees of.....**VIGILANTE GROUP OF NIGERIA===**

.....

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED THAT:

.....

'SEE BACK PAGE'

.....

the duly appointed Trustees of.....**VIGILANTE GROUP OF NIGERIA===**

have this day been registered as a corporate body, subject to the below mentioned conditions and directions.

Given under the affixed common seal of the Corporate Affairs Commission at Abuja this day of.....**18TH FEBRUARY,**.....**1999**.....

.....  
**J. K. AHMADU-SUKA,**  
FOR: REGISTRAR GENERAL

**CONDITIONS AND DIRECTIONS**

*"This Certificate is liable to cancellation should the objects or the rules of the body as set out in the Annexures hereto be changed without the previous consent in writing of the CAC or should the body at any time permit or condone any divergence from or breach of such objects and rules, or the body is dissolved under Section 691 of the Companies and Allied Matters Decree No.1, 1990."*

# VIGILANTE GROUP OF NIGERIA

## NATIONAL HEAD QUARTERS:

G.R. 3, Zango Road,  
P.O. Box 3036,  
S/Gari, T/Wada, Kaduna.  
08034523533.



## ABUJA OFFICE:

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3rd Floor, Danziyal Plaza,  
Opp. NNPC Mega Station,  
Central Area, FCT, Abuja.  
08077773459 (RC: 11834)

VGN NO/.....  
APPLICATION FOR ENROLMENT

FSN.....001500

AFFIX PASSPORT

FULL NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
(SURNAME) (OTHER NAMES)

NATIONALITY \_\_\_\_\_ TRIBE \_\_\_\_\_

ZONE \_\_\_\_\_ DISTRICT \_\_\_\_\_ LOCAL GOVERNMENT \_\_\_\_\_

DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_ L.G.A. \_\_\_\_\_ STATE OF ORIGIN \_\_\_\_\_

NAME AND ADDRESS OF YOUR PRESENT EMPLOYER \_\_\_\_\_

FULL HOME ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

SIGN. OF APPLICANT \_\_\_\_\_

## GUARANTOR

	NAME	OCCUPATION	ADDRESS	PERIOD KNOWN TO APPLICANT	ADDRESS

WARD HEAD

SIGN AND DATE

VILLAGE HEAD

SIGN AND DATE

NOTE: GUARANTOR/WARD/VILLAGE HEAD: (THIS SIGNING MEANS THE APPLICANT IS TO THE BEST OF YOUR KNOWLEDGE A PERSON OF UNQUESTIONABLE CHARACTER)

## FOR OFFICE USE ONLY


INTERVIEWED BY \_\_\_\_\_

ENROLMENT TO \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE OF APPROVING AUTHORITY / PERSON

# VIGILANTE GROUP

**NATIONAL HEAD QUARTERS:**  
G.R. 3, Zango Road,  
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# OF NIGERIA

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3rd Floor, Danzaiya Plaza,  
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Central Area, FCT, Abuja.  
08077773459 (RC: 11834)

VGN NO/.....

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF BIRTH \_\_\_\_\_ SEX \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF PRINT \_\_\_\_\_

LEFT HAND FINGERS

LEFT HAND THUMB

OTHER DATA

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RIGHT HAND FINGERS

LEFT HAND THUMB

1. HEIGHT .....INS

2. SHAPE OF FACE.....

3. COLOUR OF EYES.....

4. COLOUR OF HAIR.....

5. SIGNATURE.....

**MOTTO: SAY NO TO CRIME**



# VIGILANTE GROUP OF NIGERIA

## NATIONAL HEAD QUARTERS:

G.R. 3, Zango Road,  
P.O. Box 3036,  
S/Gari, T/Wada, Kaduna.  
08034523533.



## ABUJA OFFICE:

Suite D 13/14,  
3rd Floor, Danziyal Plaza,  
Opp. NNPC Mega Station,  
Central Area, FCT, Abuja.  
08077773459 (RC: 11834)

VGN NO/.....

## MEMBERS NOMINAL ROLL

NAME (Surname first)			Affix a recent passport here with no cap on
ADDRESS			
SEX	AGE	HEIGHT	
MARITAL STATUS		BLOOD GROUP	
VGN FORM NO		LOCAL GOVT. AREA	
GENOTYPE		SIGNATURE	

.....  
Commander General

.....  
State Commander

# VIGILANTE GROUP OF NIGERIA



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VGN NO/.....

## DECLARATION

I, Chief/Mr./Mrs.....Of.....

### Declare as follows:

1. That I am a bonafide member of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (V.G.N.) .....  
.....Command
2. That I agree to be honest, faithful and loyal to Vigilante Group of Nigeria (V.G.N.) at all time and to be a good ambassador of V.G.N.
3. That I shall be law abiding citizen of Nigeria, and shall Not take law into my hands.
4. That I am ready to make myself available to the office/service Vigilante Group of Nigeria when I ever call upon to do so.
5. That I shall NOT act beyond the instruction of my senior officer and constitution of the V.G.N. And Nigeria.
6. That the identification card/Uniform I obtain from the Vigilante Group of Nigeria shall NOT be used to commit crime in the society otherwise I shall be held responsible for any crime that may be committed by me if caught without the intervention of V.G.N. Officers.
7. That all report of crime found in my society shall be make available to the senior officer of V.G.N.....Command who shall forward same to the appropriate quarters of law agency.
8. That the said I.D. Card referring to shall be submitted to the officer of V.G.N. through the officer who shall take appropriate record of it whenever I decide to withdraw myself/service from the group.
9. That the above was read over and interpreted to me in .....language by.....  
..... (Interpreter) and same was understood before I append my signature/thumb impression thereto:

Dated this.....day of.....

Member.....

Witness.....