



Menace of Kidnapping and Challenges of Post Abduction Living

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Abstract

Kidnapping refers to crime of seizing, confining, abducting, or carrying away a person by force or fraud, often to subject him or her to involuntary servitude in an attempt to demand for a ransom. The paper looked at the concept of kidnapping, prevalence of kidnapping, a concise history of kidnapping in Nigeria, strength of kidnapping in Nigeria, Menace of Kidnapping and Challenges of Post Abduction Living and recovery and future. Some of the recommendations highlighted include; released hostage should receive resources and information about how to see counseling, youths should be provided with enabling environment that would make them relevant in the scheme of things in Nigeria.

Keywords: Menace, Kidnapping, Challenges, Post Abduction, Living

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Introduction

The structural functionalism theory is associated with the works of Emile Durkheim (1917). Robert K. Merton (1968) and Talcott Person (1979). The basic assumption of the theory sees the society as living organism made up of components part. Function harmoniously for the survival of the whole system. If any part fails to contribute to identifiably useful function neither does it promote values consensus among members of the society it will not be passed on from one generation to the next (Schaefer, 2002). When applying the theory to explain the social problem of kidnapping in Nigeria and its implication on the socioeconomic development; structural functionalism assumes that the economy which is part of the social system is not functioning well. This is due to the mismanagement that occurs within different sectors, one of which is the political sector. This dysfunction within the system cause high level of poverty. Unemployment deprivation as well as marginalization. The rich are getting richer and poor are getting poorer the result is visualized high crime rate of which kidnapping is at the fore front. The

crime of kidnapping has been identified as profitable to its perpetrators.

Nigeria is a political region of hate and like, a country with an apparent deference between the rich and poor. The rich in Nigeria, likewise those in powers and authority secure good jobs and opportunities for their children.

These actions of the rich cause envy and hatred in the heart of the poor and thereby making some of them to engage in some illegal acts like kidnapping, robbery, assassination, terrorism etc.

Concept of Kidnapping

According to Johann Moritz Rugenda (1858-1858), in criminal law, kidnapping is the abduction and restraint by force or unlawful transportation of a person usually in order to hold them captive against their will. This may be done with a demand for ransom in exchange for releasing them from concealment, for other illegal purposes. Kidnapping can be accompanied by bodily injury which elevates the crime to aggravated kidnapping.

Walsh and Adrian (1983) defined kidnapping as unlawful seizure and detention of a

person(s) by force against their will. For Inyang (2013) kidnapping is the forcible seizing, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will. It is an act of seizing. Taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or fraud (Abraham, 2010). This includes snatching and seizing of a person in order to collect a ransom in return or settle some scores of disagreement among people. Robertson in Walsh and Adrian (1983) defined kidnapping as a crime of seizing. Conforming abducting or carrying away of persons by force or fraud often subject him or her to involuntary servitude in an attempt to demand a ransom or in furtherance of another crime. In the view of Thomas and Nta (2009) kidnapping is an organized and systematic robbery which is not as deadly as armed robbery but more profitable than former. The profitability has encouraged those that indulged in to carry on with the act although there is law prohibiting it (Inyang, 2013). From the perspective of criminal law Arewa (2013). Citing the case of state and Harrison which defines kidnapping as “false imprisonment aggravated by conveying the imprisoned person to some other place. In the state Vinland, it is defined as “the unlawful taking and carrying away of human being against his will by force or fraud or threats or intimidation, to seize and detain him for the purpose of so carrying him away”. (Arewa, 2013).

Kidnapping refers to crime of seizing, confining, abducting, or carrying away a person by force or fraud, often to subject him or her to involuntary servitude in an attempt to demand a ransom. Most countries consider it a graven offence punishable by a long prison sentence or death. Kidnapping is the illegal abuse and financial exploitation of the victims of kidnapping. Kidnapping for the purpose of extortion has become a tactic of political revolutionaries or terrorists seeking concession from a government. Kidnapping is a trade that is difficult for the operators to quit. This trade is like child trafficking. It is a multimillion criminal industry in the world especially in Nigeria. This criminal business is the fourth most lucrative, commerce in Nigeria



after oil bunkering, prostitution and child trafficking.

Kidnapping gained momentum in Nigeria as a response to joblessness, moral decadence, hopelessness and frustration among the youths. The politicians and disgruntled individual seized the opportunity to perpetuate criminality. The miscreants use this criminal model as the easiest method for intimidating human beings for easy access to cash. Osumah and Aghedo (2011) argue that kidnapping is “an engagement for economic survival, securing political and business advantage over rivals and co-competitors” (p.277).

Prevalence of Kidnapping

The rate of kidnapping in Europe, North, and South American is attracting the attention of people all over the globe. Some people have made a lot of money this way and some have taken it as their business.

In Mexico, with its history of drug-war violence and corrupt police, kidnapping is an old story, Mexico suffered an estimated 105,682 kidnapping in 2012 (U.S Department of State, 2014:74). In 2013, Mexico officially recorded 1,698 kidnapping, the highest number on record (Washington Post, 2014). That same year, Marian’s Organization Association tallied kidnapping in Mexico at 3,038.

The disappearance of children in the United State is not unheard of either, and it is one of the things that the security apparatus in that country is working to overcome. According to the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children, roughly 800,000 children are reported missing each year in the US.

The act of kidnapping has made so many people lost their sense of reasoning. That was seen in the incidence that took place in the United Kingdom where a woman kidnapped her own daughter. This was reported through The Sun UK Newspaper publication. Quoting from among the lines of the news report, “Karen Mathews was jailed for eight years for her part in faking the kidnap of her own daughter in 2008. The mum-of –seven, who has been dubbed Britain’s Most Hated Mum, was released from prison after serving half of herb sentence.”

The question may be, why should a mother kidnap her daughter? Is she normal at all? The answer is that she kidnapped her own daughter just for business. The answer to the second question is that she was completely normal. She kidnapped her daughter so that she could claim £50,000 reward money for finding Shannon as the money would not come out from her own pocket. What a shallow thinking. She planned to share the ransom with her relative Michael Donovan who entered the plot with her. They wanted to walk away with the money reward made by the government to who would find the child.

According to the Offender Management Caseload Statistics, UK had recorded about 57 convicted kidnapping cases between 2007-2008. At this juncture, one would like to know the factors responsible for this notorious act, its effects and possible ways of curbing the menace in Nigeria.

A Concise History of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping in Nigeria started in the new millennium. Kidnapping in Nigeria began rising in 2006 when militants in Niger-delta started kidnapping expatriates for ransom (Internet: najafeed). Another source has it that: it all started on September 16th 2005. When a group named Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) threatens to attack British nationals and facilities in Nigeria-Delta if the British police failed to release a former governor who was arrested in London for money laundering offences. However, The Federal Government dismissed the threat and couples of days after. Nigeria military troop were deployed to their region.

On September 20th 2005, a leader of another group named Alhaji Asari Dokubo. Leader of the Niger-Delta People Volunteer Force (NDPVF) was arrested by the Nigerian government in connection with the rising tension in Niger-Delta. On January 11th 2007, what appeared to be the first reported case of abduction of expatriates took place when four foreign oil workers working on the AE fields of shell petroleum were kidnapped by militants import account? This resulted in a further cut-back of 120,000 barrels per day in crude oil production.



On January 15th 2006, ten persons including soldiers of the military joint task force. Deployed by the government to the Niger-Delta region (operation restore hope) were crushed to death.

On February 5th 2007, Nine Chinese workers that that were kidnapped in Bayelsa (a southern state of Nigeria) were released after being held for eleven days on 25th of February, that same year.

On February 9th 2007, what appeared to be a major warning to the government and the citizens was announced by the militants when they vowed to extend hostilities beyond the Niger-Delta region to other parts of the country. They also warned all expatriates to leave Nigeria with immediate effect. And on this day, the American Cable News Network (CNN) reported that there were no fewer than 200,000 armed militants in the Niger Delta region. On March 15th 2007, after 98 days in captivity, two Italian oil workers regained freedom. They were employees of the Agip oil.

The kidnapping went on and between March 15 to May 16, when the official residence of the Nigeria's vice president elect was bombed, but his mother miraculously escapes through a boat unhurt. In the later part of June, 2007, some militants kidnapped a 4 years-old Nigeria-British girl while on her way to school but was released after several appeals after several appeals from the Nigerian president and well-wishers

The most prominent thing about these kidnapping was that huge amount of money was being paid as ransom before these expatriates are released. However, none of the expatriates lost his life even though there are many sad tales from these expatriates after their release.

However, in the earlier part July 2007, Nigerians as well as foreign oil worker in the Niger-Delta region woke up to the news that the leader of the ND PVF had been released from prison by the order of the appeal court. Hence, there was a reduction in hostage taking as well as an agreement signed by the carious militant groups and the Federal Government that hence forth. There would not be hostage or expatriate abduction in Nigeria again, a

peace deal that has stopped in then. It is the abduction of expatriates that has stopped in Nigeria. However, the abduction of members of the Nigerian society is still fruitful. According to a one-time minister of police affair in Nigeria Mr. Ibrahim Yakubu Lame. “512 people were kidnapped in 2009 and 30 and out of the 512 died in the hand of their kidnapers. (Tunde, 2009).

Commenting on the agitations of the Niger-Delta militants (Olalekan (2017) said “the desire of militants to become independent and form smaller groups led to the rampant kidnapping incidents in different parts of the state” he stressed further that: “The leader of the major robbery gangs in the whole of the country, TK, was recently killed during a gun battle with the police and members of his gang have switched to kidnapping. Initially what they do is target a rich personality or their realties but they don’t so again. What they do is that they go to Reverie schools and communities and kidnap many people so as to affect the ransom in bulk” (p.5). In a Village in Otukpo area of Benue State, the kidnapers of the catholic priest killed him in cold blood, despite receiving about ₦2 million from his family members (Daily Trust 2016).

Statistics shows that the level of kidnapping activities in the country is not encouraging. Citizens of the country are advancing in it and think that it is the best and quickest way to make money. Nigeria accounted for 26 percent of kidnapping and ransom incidents globally in the first half of 2013, a recent statistics release by International Specialist Crisis Prevention and Response Consultancy indicated.

In the data on the kidnapping incidence release by Risk Map Report in 2014 subtitled “Global Kidnapping hot-spot”, Nigeria is seen as the 5th amongst the countries that have experienced high kidnapping incidence in that year. Another risk consultancy firm, Control Risks, reported recently that 74 percent of kidnappings recorded in African in 2012 occurred in Nigeria (Daily Independence, 2013). According to Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC), Nigeria in the recent years is among the top ten countries with high kidnapping incidence globally.



The Cable had reported that at least 1,157 students have been abducted over the course of seven years in northern Nigeria. According to Soyinka (2021) no one can tell, when and how the stress and remind ourselves that not only are these abnormal times, but seems to be times of the shirking responsibility in very key areas.

Two weeks after the bandits kidnapped 27 students and 15 workers of Government Science College Kagara, Niger State, 317 school girls were abducted in the Government Girls Secondary School Jangebe in Zamfara State on Friday 26th of February 2021. As a result of these, some schools have been closed in Kano after shutting down 10 boarding schools in the same state. The schools closed down are Rabi Musa Kwankwaso College of Advanced and Remedial Studies, Tundun Wada; School of Environmental Studies, Gwarzo; School of Rural Technology and Entrepreneurship Development, Rano; and Audu Bako College of Agricultural Development, Dambatta. Kidnapping has kept Nigeria in state of dilemma, a land where people see bad behaviour as a means of making huge money. It is one of the major problems being experienced in the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

Strength of Kidnapping in Nigeria

Kidnapping is all over Nigeria. It is a national problem that has eaten so deep into the tissue of the nation. It is a problem that that need to be tackled nationally. Kidnapping is growing daily in Nigeria. This criminal commerce paints an ugly picture of the already battered image of Nigeria. This kidnapping racket has become incurable disease kidnapping become a life threatening ailment. For instance, there is no much in Nigeria when we do not read on the pages of newspapers about cases of kidnapping. Kidnapping has become the bane of our nation. It is evident that Nigeria society has lost hope of tomorrow. The kidnapping of young and old people in Nigeria are bane of our live today. Nigerians, who are involved in this ugly business find it difficult to quit. Kidnapers see it as a business that can never be abolished by any government in Nigeria. This is because, the Government of Nigeria is

yet to take a bold step to find a lasting panacea to this barbaric act. Once the government comes with a stiff action against the kidnappers, the idea of seeing the trade as a type coated with much profit would be a forgotten trade. Unarguably, the cardinal security puzzle that seems to be quaking the Nigerian nation is the series of foreign oil and construction workers as well as series of attacks on the oil facilities by the militant in Niger delta region of Nigerian. Since the beginning of this criminal act of kidnapping, Nigeria has recorded huge losses in crude oil. This has made many Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) to spring up in Nigeria. One of such is 'Erukaye Hope' a Non-Governmental Organization based in Delta State. Many have and are still making effort to obstruct this criminal business.

Following the report release of the German archaeologists kidnapped in Kaduna State, a top-level security consultant and public affairs analyst, Dehinde Ariyo, has said that kidnapping thieves unabated in Nigeria because of the outdated security architecture in the country, low-level of ammunition used by security operatives; and government's laxity in putting measure in place to prevent the menace. He said this in Lagos while commenting on the security situation across the nation.

Ariyo blamed the government for not nipping the menace of abduction in the bud when it first began at an unsophisticated level in the Niger-Delta region, saying that it turned a blind eye to the social vice until it advanced to the level of kidnapping for ransom and higher level of random kidnapping experienced today. He said that since it has been noted that most kidnappers escape with their victims through the waterways, there was need for government to establish naval police along the inland waterways in the country to facilitate easier arrest of kidnappers.

The security expert lamented the report of some kidnappers possessing fire power that was more superior to that of the security operatives; stressing that so long as that trend continues, kidnappers will continue to enjoy a field day in the country. He said: "To fight kidnapping to a stand-still, we need to first



change the archaic security architecture in the country. Then, raise the level of the ammunition used by our security operatives. And, let the government be more proactive in combating kidnapping. "There are places now that are recognized as dark spots for kidnapping. The government is not doing well in putting in place funds and adopting proactive measure against kidnapping.

Kidnapping began in the Niger-Delta, when people were abducted, mainly foreigners in protest for the companies not them enough of whatever they wanted from there. From abduction, they moved on to kidnapping for ransom, and today it is now random, and today it is now random kidnapping. "The Kaduna case was very painful. Those guys have been forward thinking enough to know that being whites confers on them kidnap value. For that purpose alone, security around them should have been stepped up. That is a laxity on the government's side. On the kidnappings that take place along the Coastal States in Nigeria, there should have been Naval police around the waterways, because the kidnappers mainly use the waterways to escape with their victims. Remember that lately, a container of over 600 hedge arms was intercepted. You and I cannot determine how many more of such ammunitions are in the hands of the wrong person on the street, and they put them to use. Unfortunately, they have superior fire power against our policemen. This has been the trend overtime. "one would have expected that our security agencies would have stepped-up their game knowing that they are faced with more deadly opposition-people who don't care; who are in it for purpose; who are ready to die, if need be, and that's why you confront them, they begin to kill.

So, to that extent, the security agencies should change the game plan in such a way that when the kidnappers know they would be confronting a police with more superior power, they would think twice. What do you have? A situation where they are beating our policemen, killing our policeman even our soldiers and taking away their guns; the guns they have on ground now should be withdraw "over time, we have had increased funding for our policemen and other agencies. If we

follow the trend of what we have been reading in the media lately, such funds have been stolen or misappropriated and course diverted and not used for the purpose for which they were meant.

For as long as are handing these cases; we will continue giving the criminals a field day. Kidnapping is not new in Nigeria and is one of the country's big challenges. Nigeria faces problems in education, unemployment, corruption and kidnapping. Facts and figures show that the kidnapping frequency in the country is high.

The kidnappings are political because politicians who are bad eggs want to destroy the leadership of President Good luck Jonathan. The attacks and kidnappings are at the same time religious because of the group's fundamentalist Islamism. The meaning of their name is "Western education is prohibited," which is why they continue to target school children. On the night of 14-15 April 2014, about 276 (16 to 18-years-old Chibok school girls) were kidnapped by Boko Haram.

Sometimes, ordinary citizens participate in this crime in order to fill their pockets, usually youths employed by rich men who conduct kidnapping as a modern business. They target rich families and sometimes demand up to twenty million naira. A popular Christian music singer in Nigeria, Chika Okpalam lamented that kidnappers had abducted his friend in one of his songs titled "Ndi Nto" (meaning "the kidnappers"). He stated that when they were asked why they did it they said they needed money, and they did not have any jobs because of high unemployment the country.

The government of Anambra State in Nigeria recently made new law altering the punishment any perpetrator caught in the act of kidnapping will receive. The law was made during the leadership of Governor Peter Obi of APGA and said that any person caught in the offence of kidnapping will be sentenced to death and anything bought with the ransom money like a house or car, will be destroyed.

Statistics appear to support the views of analyst. In December 2009, police affairs minister, disclosed that 512 cases of kidnapping had been recorded from January



2008 to June 2009 against 353 recorded in 2008. Rundown of the statistics indicates that Abia state led the pack with a total of 110 kidnapping incidents: Imo: 58,109 arrest, 41 prosecutions and one dead, Delta recorded 44 kidnap cases, 43 releases, 27 arrests, 31 prosecuted and one death, and Akwa Ibom recorded 40 kid cases, 418 arrests and 11 prosecutions. The report added that between July/September 2008 and July 2009, over 600 million was lost to kidnappers. But beyond statistics being available, it is known fact the most kidnap cases are never reported to the police authority for the fear of murder of the victim hence most families prefer to pay ransom to losing one of its own. For instance, in Kano, N80 million ransom was allegedly paid to kidnappers for the release of Kano – based multi- millionaire businessman, without a recourse to the police authorities; an industrialist in Nnewi paid N70 million to regain his freedom from captors; another multi-millionaire businessman was kidnapped and released after he allegedly paid a ransom without recourse from the police (Umejei, 2010).

The associated press in its report of August 27, 2008 stated that "more than 200 foreigners have been kidnapped in two years of heightened violence across Nigeria" restive south, the victims are normally released unharmed after a ransom is paid, although several have been killed during botched seizures or rescue attempts "victims are maimed, raped and manhandled in such manner that the stigma remains almost perpetually. The families and associates are knocked down by intractable trauma," (Kupoluyi, 2009).

On Sunday, July 11, 2010, four journalists and a driver travelling in a convoy of buses from a conference in Uyo, Akwa-ibom State, were kidnapped in Abia State on their way back to Lagos. From their hideout, the abductors demanded a ransom of N250 million, and later reduced it to N30 million. A torrent of protests, condemnations and threats, greeted the action of the kidnappers and they were forced to let go of their victims. However, the police did not make a clear statement whether ransom was paid or not.

In Idah, Kogi State, the mother of the former president of Nigeria Football Federation (NFF), was also abducted. In Kano, a businessman was forcibly abducted in the presence of his family. The criminals were apparently looking for dollars; not finding it, they shot and injured his three children and still made off with him. In Akwa-Ibom where as many as ten Medical Doctors were kidnapped, staff of the university teaching hospital went on an indefinite strike following the failure of kidnappers to release their latest victim, a consultant pediatric surgeon. As a consequence, medical services at the specialist hospital were paralyzed and patients were stranded. Also 26 United Kingdom nationals were kidnapped in Nigeria in between 2006 and 2007.

The oil-rich Niger-Delta region of Nigeria has seen an explosion in the number of foreigners kidnapped for financial or political gain. Seven foreigners were reported kidnapped in Nigeria in 2005. That figure increased to 72 in 2006 and 223 in 2007. This exponential increase has been largely the result of activity by the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) and other armed militant groups. 26 of the hostages were UK nationals. Of the 295 foreigners kidnapped in 2006 and 2007, five died as a result of injuries sustained during their abduction-including a Briton killed when the kidnappers' boat was attacked by the Nigerian navy. One Syrian hostage died of illness very shortly after his release. The important thing according to Soyinka (2021) is that we are close to accepting an unacceptable culture.

Menace of Kidnapping and Challenges of Post Abduction Living

Hostage and kidnapped survivors can experience stress reactions, including denial, impaired memory, shock, numbness, anxiety, guilt, depression, anger, and a sense of helplessness.

Freedom almost always brings a sense elation and relief. However, adjusting back to the real world after being held hostage can be just as difficult as disrupting leaving it. Upon release, many hostage survivors are faced with transitioning from conditions of isolation and



helplessness to sensory overload and freedom. This transition often results significant adjustment difficulties.

Hostage and kidnap survivor can experience reactions. Typical reactions occur in:

► **Thinking:** Intrusive thoughts, denial, impaired memory, decreased concentration, being overcautious and aware, confusion, or fears of the event happening again.

► **Emotion:** Shock, numbness, anxiety, guilt, depression, anger, and a sense of helplessness.

► **Interaction:** Withdrawal an avoidance of family, friend's activities, and being on edge. Such reactions to an extremely stressful event are understandable and normal. These are typical responses and generally decrease after a period of time. It is common for people's reactions to vary from one individual to another.

According to research, hostage survivors often develop an unconscious bond to their captors and experience grief if their captors are harmed. They may also feel guilt for developing a bond. This is typically referred to as the Stockholm syndrome

Hostage survivors may also have feelings of guilt for surviving while others did not. It is important for survivors to recognize that these are usual human reactions to being held captive.

When hostages are released, it is essential for them to:

- Receive medical attention
- Be in a safe and secure environment
- Connect with loved ones.
- Have an opportunity to talk or journal their experience if and when they choose
- Receive resources and information about how to seek counselling, particularly if their distress from the incident is interfering with the daily lives.
- Protect their privacy (eg. avoid media overexposure including watching and listening to news and participation in media interviews)
- Take time to adjust back into family and work. Family and friends can support survivors by listening, being patient and focusing on their freedom instead of engaging in negative talk about the captors.

It is important to realize that families and friends of hostages are confronted with

numerous issues in coping with fears and uncertainties as well and may also need support in dealing with their own emotional reactions.

Recovery and the future

Released hostages need time to recover from the physical, mental and emotional difficulties they faced. However, it is important to keep in mind that human beings are highly resilient and can persevere in spite of tragedy. Research shows that positive growth and resilience can occur following trauma.

Hostage survivors may feel lost or have difficulty managing intense reactions and may need help adjusting to their old life following release. If there are chronic indications of stress, continued feelings of numbness, disturbed sleep, as well as other signs, the hostage survivors might want to consider seeking help from a licensed mental health professional, such as psychologist, who can help develop an appropriate strategy for moving forward.

Conclusion

Political, economic and security issues in Nigeria reveals that Nigerian youths resulted into kidnapping as a response to their joblessness, moral decadence, hopelessness and frustrations. Expatriate staffs in Nigerian are at the risk of being kidnapped because our judicial and political systems are weak or corrupt. There is a huge disparity between rich and poor coupled with political and economic breakdown. Government is not doing well in putting in place funds and adopting proactive measure against kidnapping. Typical reactions occur in the thinking, reaction and emotion of the survivors of the kidnapers.

Recommendations

1. Idle hand is a devil workshop; Nigerian youths should be provided with enabling environment that would make them relevant in the scheme of things in government
2. Politician should treat every Nigerian equally regardless of the political party an individual belong. Our judiciary must be given free hands to operate in order to



enact severe penalties on the convict kidnapers as this will serve as deterrent to others.

3. Rich people should strive to ensure the survival of the poor ones by helping them from the little God has given them.
4. Government should release more funds to security outfit and ensure that apprehended kidnapers do not go scout free.
5. Released hostage should receive recourses and information about how to seek counselling.

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