

# **SACRALIZED SECURITY AND TECHNOLOGICAL NEGLECT: EXAMINING FAITH-BASED SECURITY IN THE SOUTHEAST NIGERIA**

Anayo Ossai, Ph.D & Moses Onyekachi Nwakanma, PhD  
Religion and Human Relations,  
Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

## **Abstract**

*Over-reliance on religious and traditional forms of protection, such as deities, charms, holy mass, Christian night vigils, and spiritual rites, which are not enough against modern threats, like cybercrime, armed robbery, kidnapping and terrorism lack evidence-based investigations, delay in emergency response, incompatibility with formal legal systems, lack technological innovation in mitigating of the recent insecurity in South-East Nigeria. There is a noticeable research gap in understanding how the dependency on religious and traditional forms of protection undermines the development and effectiveness of modern, technology-based security systems. This gap limits comprehensive policy and community responses to rising contemporary threats. The study uses **Ulrich Beck's Risk Society Theory to examine** how the growing reliance on religious and traditional methods of security in South-East Nigeria is inadequate in addressing the complex, modern risks. The theory highlights the urgent need for adopting technological solutions to effectively manage and respond to these emerging security threats. The study utilizes the mixed method of data collection through Surveys/Questionnaires, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), Participant Observation and Case Studies. The method provides deep insights into the comprehensive understanding, contextual depth and addresses complexity. This approach is relevant for understanding the interplay between religion, culture, and technology in fight against contemporary insecurity in South-East. This method reveals that sole reliance on faith-based means of managing security has been insufficient in effectively addressing the complex and evolving security challenges in Southeast Nigeria. It highlights the need to integrate modern technological approaches to enhance security outcomes in the region.*

**Keywords: South-East; Religious; Technology; Insecurity; Threats and Over-reliance**

## **Introduction**

Insecurity has become a defining challenge of contemporary Nigeria, particularly in the southeastern region inhabited predominantly by the Igbo people. These include terrorism, armed robbery, abduction, cybercrime, political unrest, unknown gunmen and the collapse of public safety infrastructure. The state's inability to safeguard people and property has resulted in a growing security vacuum. Instead of being addressed by sufficient technology investment and amendments to legislation, this gap is filled by turning to spiritual activities and religious belief systems. In order to prevent crime and settle disputes, communities who formerly depended on the state's assurance of a contemporary security system now resort to local oracles, ancestral deities, tradition vows, holy mass, and Christian night vigils. A rising dependence on faith in the face of institutional and technical negligence is shown by this phenomena, which has been termed "sacrificializing the security vacuum." According to Mavelli (2012), secularization puts the ideas of fear and treating some situations as special or above normal rules at the heart of how modern states are built and how they approach security. This growing dependence on religious structures for protection, justice, and moral order represents a process of *sacralizing the security vacuum*. In this context, faith becomes more than a spiritual refuge; it evolves into a socio-political strategy of survival and self-defense.

Shrines, prayer houses, fasting sessions, prophetic declarations, traditional oaths, and ritual sanctions are mobilized as functional responses to insecurity. Both indigenous and Christian religious traditions are being reframed as tools of communal regulation in the absence of effective state apparatus and modern security technologies. Traditional Igbo religious rituals have always featured intricate systems for maintaining law and order. In pre-colonial periods, the belief in cosmic justice, ancestor deities, and the employment of *IkpọMma* (Invocation of deity) served as powerful instruments for social control and dispute resolution. These systems remained dormant in the people's cultural awareness despite being largely displaced by colonization and the spread of Christianity. Many communities are resurrecting these traditions in the present moment of insecurity not out of cultural desire but as workable alternatives in situations when government police has fallen short.

At the same time, Christianity, especially Pentecostal and evangelical forms have a significant influence on how Igbo culture reacts to existential threats. In addition to being places of worship, churches are now spiritual strongholds where members go to seek protection from both material and spiritual threats. Exorcism, prophesy, anointing ceremonies, and vigil prayers have evolved into spiritual equipment used to fight off evil spirits and criminals. Christian and indigenous traditions coexist as tools for re-establishing security in a religiously diverse culture like Igboland, sometimes peacefully and other times in conflict. This shift towards religion is rooted in a serious issue of technical neglect. Many Igbo communities lack even the most basic means of conventional police, in contrast to worldwide trends where crime prevention is being controlled via digital monitoring, biometric identification, forensic science, and artificial intelligence. The marginalization of rural areas, inadequate infrastructure, and low government investment has produced an environment where technical advancement in public security is off. This disregard creates a vacuum that is not objective; it allows spiritual systems to fill the gaps created by absence of cables, cameras, and data. As a result, the socialization of insecurity is a sort of local demonstration against government abandonment rather than just a religious coming back. Faith turns into community accessible and culturally comprehensible form of defense. In Igboland today, religion serves as both a practical means of defense and an ethical compass, whether through Pentecostal warfare prayers or ancestral punishments. Religious organizations therefore fulfill civic and political tasks that are assigned to the state. This advancement is not without issues, however. There are new moral and legal challenges when religious systems are used to provide security. Such methods raise concerns regarding their consistency with human rights, constitutional justice, and appropriate government. The establishment of charismatic spiritual leaders or the return of fear-based traditional penalties runs the danger of strengthening non-state actors whose legitimacy may not be held accountable by the general public. Furthermore, integrating religion with power relations may lead to discriminatory behaviors, spiritual manipulation, or even acts of violence that are passed off as acts of divine justice.

The purpose of this study is to critically examine the growing reliance on indigenous and Christian religious frameworks as responses to insecurity in southeastern Nigeria and to argue that, while these faith-based mechanisms offer culturally resonant and morally compelling forms of community defense, they are ultimately inadequate in addressing the complexity and scale of contemporary security threats. By highlighting the limitations of sacralized responses such as traditional oaths, spiritual warfare, and ritual sanctions, this study emphasizes the urgent need for the integration of modern security technologies, including surveillance systems, forensic tools, and digital intelligence, as more effective and sustainable solutions. It contends that faith-based approaches, though valuable in reinforcing communal bonds and ethical accountability, cannot substitute for the comprehensive and data-driven strategies required to confront organized crime, terrorism, and cyber threats in today's security landscape.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Ulrich Beck's theory of Risk Society offers a valuable lens through which to analyze the interplay between sacralized security and technological neglect in South-East Nigeria. According to Beck, society today is becoming more and more concerned with risk management. For the theory, traditional reliance on religious and spiritual protection could conceal the pressing need to address modern security challenges through more logical and technologically advanced means. This is especially true in some communities in South-East Nigeria, where faith-based security measures predominate. By using this theoretical approach, the research is able to objectively evaluate how cultural and religious beliefs influence risk perceptions at the price of implementing practical technology solutions. Beck's theory is relevant to this study because it helps explain how the sacralization of security where religious rituals and faith are regarded as the primary means of protection contributes to a neglect of, and failure to invest in, technological advancements that could provide more practical and effective solutions to crime in the South-East. Beck contends that rather than depending on religion or superstition, a risk society needs scientific understanding and technical expertise to address threats. Using this framework, the paper highlights the shortcomings of sacralized security practices, demonstrating that although faith-based strategies can provide social cohesion or psychological comfort, they fall short in effectively mitigating actual threats, increasing vulnerabilities. The focus on modernization also suggests that society can use new technologies as part of a more progressive approach to security and critically examine current risk management techniques. This theoretical viewpoint backs up the claim that technology such as surveillance systems, data analytics, and enhanced communication networks can perform better than faith-based approaches in tackling the intricate, multidimensional security issues that Southeast Nigeria is now confronting.

### **Conceptual Clarifications**

**Sacralized Security** - The term "sacralized security" describes how religious or spiritual ideas are incorporated into a community's social order and defense systems. In this sense, security is seen to be influenced or controlled by supernatural powers rather than being exclusively reliant on governmental organizations like the military or police. This idea is particularly noticeable in societies, whose religious systems are integral to day-to-day existence, impacting how people and groups handle dangers, resolve disputes, and pursue justice. Sacralized security frames security as a spiritual and collective duty by using prayers, rituals, religious decrees, and spiritual consultations as defenses against both material and spiritual dangers. Sacralized security is a reaction to the alleged shortcomings or inadequacies of governmental security organizations in South-East Nigeria. Many communities have looked to religious leaders, traditional priests, and holy symbols as alternate sources of security in the face of rising levels of violence, banditry, armed robbery, kidnapping and political unrest. This has resulted in the emergence of vigilante organizations with Christian or indigenous spiritual roots, whereby divine intervention is seen as providing more assurance than government or technology-driven security measures. This kind of security, which often coexists uncomfortably alongside conventional security mechanisms and sometimes rejects them completely indicates a strong reliance on faith and spiritual authority.

**Faith-Based Security Systems** - Faith-based security systems are community-based strategies for preserving safety, peace, and order that have their roots in religious ideas, practices, and beliefs. These systems are based on the belief that spiritual powers can identify, discourage, or punish criminal activity, especially among Christian and traditional religious groups. They include religious ceremonies, spiritual commitments, religious surveillance, and prayers of the justice of God. These mechanisms function on the assumption that in situations when political institutions are

seen as ineffective, corrupt, or nonexistent, supernatural powers whether through church leaders, shrines, or ancestral spirits can uphold moral behavior and guarantee community security. These systems have both practical and symbolic purposes. In situations when state-led or technology security mechanisms are either unavailable or inadequate, they serve as informal police institutions. On the one hand, they strengthen social identity and faith in spiritual authority. Reliance on such sanctified security measures, however, could be a sign of a larger governmental infrastructure or technology failure. In order to understand how religion, power, and governance interact in modern society, faith-based security systems must be evaluated as societal reactions to structural insecurity as well as cultural or religious practices.

**Technological Neglect** - The term "technological neglect" describes the deliberate insufficient usage, underdevelopment, or disregard of contemporary technology infrastructures and instruments that are necessary for societal progress and efficient security. When it comes to security, it refers to the inability of organizations or communities to make investments in or implement technology that might improve preventative and response capabilities, such as communication networks, cyber security safeguards, surveillance systems, and data-driven intelligence. Economic limitations, a lack of political will, inadequate technical capability, or cultural and religious beliefs that downplay the importance of contemporary inventions might all be the cause of this neglect. Neglecting technology become ingrained in institutional and societal views of modernity in places where traditional or spiritual approaches to safety and governance are valued. In some communities in Southeast Nigeria, where ritual fortifications, prayer-based protections, and prophetic interventions serve as the primary forms of sacralized security, the neglect of modern technology is a reflection of deeper cultural and ideological beliefs. The emphasis placed on supernatural intervention over empirical systems in faith-based security often results in a decreased or complete rejection of technology advancements in emergency response, monitoring, and criminal detection. Sacralized methods can unintentionally obstruct attempts to implement more dependable and empirically supported security technology, even as they provide psychological reassurance and represent ingrained cultural values. This dynamic leads to a security environment where spiritual effectiveness is valued more highly than technology investment, which worsens the region's vulnerability to modern security threats.

**Risk and Insecurity in southeast Nigeria** – In South-East Nigeria today, risk and insecurity are complex issues influenced by sociopolitical, historical, and economic factors. In this sense, risk refers to the real and perceived dangers that jeopardize people, communities, and regional stability. These threats which are made worse by weak state institutions and declining public confidence in traditional security frameworks include violent crimes, political unrest, abduction for ransom, and inter-communal disputes. A history of marginalization, underdevelopment, and an unstable political environment all contribute to the public's overall feeling of vulnerability and anxiety, which in turn affects how risk is perceived.

Insecurity, however, is not limited to the lack of physical safety; it also involves the breakdown of social institutions and the absence of dependable systems for resolving conflicts and ensuring protection. In South-East, this insecurity is primarily driven by rising criminal activities such as kidnapping, armed robbery, and violent attacks, rather than religious or ethno-political tensions. The failure of state security agencies to respond effectively has led to a decline in public trust in many areas. In response, non-state actors such as vigilante groups and local community watch networks have emerged. Increasingly, communities are also turning to faith-based or sacralized security practices seeking protection through religious rituals, spiritual leaders, and belief systems. This turn to sacralized security reflects a broader disconnect with technologically driven

region's political awareness is still influenced by the narrative of institutional neglect and betrayal that these historical events generated. Secessionist ideas have been fuelled by this feeling of alienation, as organizations such as the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) have used the legacy of Biafra as a focal point for fresh demands for autonomy and self-determination. The region's instability has been aggravated by historical grievances as well as current socioeconomic and political issues. High rates of young unemployment, poor infrastructure, and weakened governmental institutions all contribute to the South-East's thriving criminal and militant scene. Political violence, armed robbery, and kidnapping for ransom have increased in frequency, and the spread of small guns has increased the seriousness of violent conflicts. Furthermore, popular mistrust and alienation have increased as a result of militarized reaction to local protest, which is marked by violations of human rights. Local militias and self-styled vigilante organizations are examples of non-state actors that have gained legitimacy and influence in many areas as a result of the state's inability to offer humane and effective security measures.

Faith-based security practices are emerging as a result of many communities in the South-East increasingly relying on traditional and religious means of protection when official security institutions fail. These reactions, which are based on indigenous belief systems and sacred authority, are seen as morally acceptable alternative for an ineffective and corrupt governmental structure in addition to being spiritually powerful. Both an assertion of indigenous epistemologies of safety and a criticism of the state's technical and bureaucratic negligence are reflected in the increased dependence on sacralized security. It emphasizes the need of critically evaluating local communities' conceptions and operations of security in order to transcend prevailing perspectives that are centered on the state and technology.

**Distrust in State Security Apparatus**—According to Tiwa (2024), institutional mistrust may be defined as people's belief that a large number of Nigeria Police Force (NPF) personnel are unreliable on the one hand, and their unwillingness to participate in any transaction that puts them open for assault by NPF police on the other. Over the past decade, there has been a concerning increase in insecurity in the south-East part of Nigeria. These developments have added to the general climate of anxiety, which has been made worse by growing doubt about the Nigerian government's ability to adequately safeguard its people. The public's distrust and anger have been heightened by the frequent accusations of extrajudicial murders, ethnic profiling, and the excessive use of force by the Nigerian military and police. Nwangwu (2023) noted this fact and write that in the South-East region of Nigeria, the most visible dangers to lives and livelihoods are the brutal military reaction of the Nigerian government to the neo-Biafra separatist uprisings and the coordinated assaults on state installations by unidentified gunmen. The official security infrastructure is either inactive or seen as an extension of political repression rather than safety for many populations, particularly in rural areas. As a consequence, individuals are looking to traditional leaders, religious organizations, and neighborhood vigilante groups as alternatives for traditional authorities and security. This change has far-reaching consequences. However, these faith-based systems often lack the forensic capabilities, logistical infrastructure, and technology monitoring of today, indicating a serious weakness in handling complex security threats. This background highlights the need for a more complex understanding of Southeast insecurity that takes into account both the socio-cultural shift towards culturally and technologically underutilized methods of protection as well as the state's inability to foster trust.

interventions. In discussing about the bringing of security men to guard the church, Tuohy (2023) write that the idea of a safety team was still somewhat contentious when we first discussed it. The congregation at the time would have agreed that God would keep us safe from evil and that firearms should not be permitted in places of worship. However, gun-related events seemed to be increasing, and it seemed foolish to believe that our church would never experience one.

### **Contextualizing Insecurity in South East Nigeria**

**Overview of Security Challenges in the Region:** The security situation in the South-East area of Nigeria has significantly deteriorated in recent years, as seen by the growth of violent crimes, non-state armed organizations, and separatist agitations. A major player in the regional security debate, the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and its affiliate, Eastern Security Network (ESN), have clashed with federal security personnel and enforced contentious sit-at-home orders. Onyebukwa (2024) remarked that as an agitation against the perceived widespread socioeconomic disparity and political marginalization that the people of the area face, separatist organizations including the Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOP), the IPOB, and the Biafra Zionist Movement (BZM) have resurfaced. The Eastern Security Network (ESN), a group of IPOB foot soldiers, has been involved with promoting and enlisting instability across the area. In addition to interfering with business operations, this has made people feel anxious and uneasy. The already unstable security situation is compounded by instances of armed robbery, abduction for ransom, and inter-communal fights, which overload the traditional law enforcement apparatus and undermine public trust in the state's capacity to safeguard people and property. Alternative security measures, especially those based on cultural and religious traditions, are becoming more and more popular as a result of traditional security agencies' inability to adequately handle insecurity issues. Faith-based reactions, from prayers to rituals of spiritual fortification, have become a means of self-defense and group comfort in many societies. This change highlights a more profound contradiction between the long-standing authority of religious organizations in local settings and contemporary technical approaches to security. Therefore, in addition to an awareness of the political and socioeconomic aspects of the region's insecurity, one must also have an understanding of how religious belief systems influence collective conceptions of safety, danger, and justice in the face of official neglect.

**Historical and Contemporary Drivers of Insecurity:** Esetang & Atai (2023) assert that Nigeria's high youth unemployment rate, Nigerians' greed, corruption, and lack of discipline, the country's wealth being unfairly accessed by the wealthy and privileged, the country's high illiteracy rate, the decline of traditional values and the poor upbringing of children at home, youth drug use, and sponsorship by unpatriotic power seekers are some of the socioeconomic factors that contributed to the country's insecurity. According to Itodo, Chidiobi & Musa (2024), a significant cause of socioeconomic conflict and a contributing factor to insecurity in Nigeria is the uneven distribution of the country's resources and the unjust treatment of the majority of its citizens. The feeling of marginalization by a segment of the population is the primary cause of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result, individuals get frustrated and look for a means to express their grievances about the widespread injustice and inequality in the nation.

Without re-examining the historical context of political marginalization and struggle that has fashioned the region's relationship with the Nigerian state, it is impossible to comprehend the insecurity now afflicting South-East Nigeria. The 1967–1970 Biafran War is remembered as a pivotal event that left the Igbo people feeling deeply excluded and sadness in addition to the destruction of infrastructure. After the war, the area experienced under-representation in national decision-making processes, unequal resource distribution, and little government investment. The

### **Technological Neglect and Security Gaps**

**Absence of Surveillance and ICT-Based Security** –Metke & Ekl (2010) proposed that the most effective security solutions can be applied to every segment of the technology system's communications network by leveraging the expertise, solutions, and standards of other systems and sectors. However, Okoye, Uchenna & Okechukwu (2023) stated that Nigeria's lack of progress in developing its information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure has undoubtedly been brought to light by the expansion of global technology. According to Akanbi & Akanbi (2012), the term "digital divide" or "technology gap" describes the difference in access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) and the ways in which people, households, businesses, and geographic areas with different socioeconomic levels use the Internet for various purposes. Compaine (2001) defines the "technology gap" more generally as the difference between those who have the means and access to modern information and communication technologies, including the internet, and those who do not. It also describes the difference between those who are effective with the technology and others who are not. The lack or malfunction of ICT-based security and surveillance systems in South-East Nigeria indicates a serious technical negligence that makes the already existing insecurity worse. Many communities in South-East still lack adequate technology, even with worldwide improvements in digital surveillance, biometric systems, and real-time data analytics for crime prevention. Government spending on ICT-driven security architecture, such as drones, emergency response systems, and CCTV networks, is either nonexistent or poorly maintained. Because of this, police enforcement organizations use outdated methods, which restrict their ability to respond quickly, get information, and discourage crime.

Moreover, deeper systemic problems like corruption, a lack of political will, and infrastructure deterioration are reflected in the inability to incorporate contemporary security systems. James & Saraso (2016) write that different divisions of the security and crime forces have been advancing the use of ICT technology, such as the Public Security Communications System (PSCS), to install CCTV to monitor crimes, and combat criminality in order to support police efforts. According to Uchenna, Chukwuemeka & Chukwuka (2018), there are certain problem areas where ICT is now being negatively impacted by some challenges. These include operating system security and design, free software concerns, design complexity, and a complicated approach, as well as a lack of security knowledge and training; many ICT initiatives, even those that have been started, are either misappropriated, abandoned in the middle, or become inefficient as a result of inadequate maintenance and a shortage of qualified staff. As a result, a generalized sense of insecurity exists, which encourages distrust of official institutions and the growth of non-state security actors. This division of power makes coordinated, intelligence-led policing even more difficult, and it makes the area more susceptible to intricate security risks. Southeast Nigeria's disregard for technology not only increases the security gap but also promotes a risky reliance on sacred kinds of defense. This circumstance emphasizes how urgently an integrated security policy that balances contemporary ICT capabilities with culturally relevant methods is needed. In addition to addressing the structural and technological issues that impede the implementation of efficient surveillance and ICT-based solutions, a successful security strategy in the area must acknowledge the significance of local belief systems. Without such a dual strategy, the area runs the danger of continuing to be caught in a cycle of insecurity that is bolstered by religion but weakened by a lack of technology.

**Ineffectiveness of Formal Policing** - One of the main causes of the increase of sacralized security methods and the disregard for technology in Southeast Nigeria is the perceived ineffectiveness of formal the security authorities. The police are seen by many people in the communities as being underfunded, dishonest, and out of touch with local affairs. This impression is strengthened by slow reaction times, the difficulty to catch offenders, and the incapacity to stop recurrent crimes like

armed robbery, abduction, and inter-communal violence. Because of this, public trust in the official police system has been gradually eroding, making room for more urgent and culturally appropriate alternative security measures. These facts were noted when Yunusa & Usman (2022), assert that the Nigerian Police Force is untrustworthy. By engaging in illegal behaviour or working with criminals, police demonstrate their great unreliability and lack of professionalism, Neild (2007) hold the view that Corruption and extortion are widespread issues in the Nigerian Police Force and that it has negatively damaged the police's reputation. Formal security enforcement organizations in South-East Nigeria do not have access to digital communication networks, forensic tools, or basic crime-tracking software. This lack of technology not only makes it more difficult to conduct investigations, but it also makes the public see the police as less trustworthy. When police forces lack dependable methods to monitor and forecast crime trends or plan for quick deployment, they sometimes come seem as reactive rather than proactive. Churches, traditional institutions, and vigilante organizations supported by religious leaders are among the sources of security that communities seek out because of this obvious disparity since they provide more spiritual or moral authority.

The lack of consistent funding for educating police officers on contemporary security procedures and technology usage increases this problem. Basic surveillance equipment is useless even when it is accessible due to a lack of technical expertise and a bad maintenance culture. As a result, in a digital age, the police system is still primarily analogue and cannot keep up with the complexity of new security risks. According to Okereke (1992), it is common knowledge that violent criminals, including armed robbers, possess much superior technology than those used by law enforcement. Not many police personnel are armed, but most armed robbers possess sophisticated automatic weapons. Their most often used weapons are the Mark IV rifle and the short rifle, both of which are challenging to handle and carry. This discrepancy further reduces public trust in the police, who are widely seen as an untrustworthy branch of the government with little ability to defend people and property. This apparent inefficiency has the cumulative impact of making sacralized kinds of security more acceptable. People are beginning to see religious leaders, traditional priests, and spiritual organizations as reliable and able to provide protection with rituals, prayers, or divine intervention. This change emphasizes how urgently reform is needed and reflects a larger social detachment with state-based security. Restoring public confidence and fostering a more harmonious cohabitation between official security measures and faith-based practices in Southeast Nigeria can be possible by addressing the police force's technological negligence through investments in ICT infrastructure, appropriate training, and accountability.

**Role of the State in Undermining Technological Innovation in Security** –According to Juma, Fang, Honca, Huete-Perez, Konde, Lee, Arenas, Ivanson (2001), there is need of using global scientific and technical expertise to address emerging nations' challenges. To be more precise, it looks at how science, technology, and development are related; new developments in innovation systems; how to encourage technical innovation; and how to make technology work for developing nations. Although the state plays a crucial role in determining South-East security setting, there is a notable lack of technology advancement that makes the existing shortcomings in security. Despite advancements in international security technology, governmental institutions have been unable to incorporate the modern technological solutions into their security apparatus. Limited funding, ineffective bureaucracy, and a lack of political will to give technical innovation in the security sector are the main causes of this neglect. As a result, the security infrastructure is still inadequately prepared and mostly relies on archaic instruments and manual procedures that are not ready to handle modern and changing complex threats.

Faith-based and community-led security efforts have attempted to address the security gap produced by this technical weakness, although in methods that emphasize spiritual authority over advanced technology. Due to the state's inability to update security measures, alternative security systems based on religious ritual and belief are unconsciously given acceptability. These systems are significant to culture, but they lack the technical ability needed to counter complicated criminal activity. Thus, the state's disregard for technological innovation not only creates gaps in security but also places the task of protection on religion groups, who may place a higher priority on ethical and spiritual protections than on practical security measures. The state's suppression of technical innovation is a reflection of larger structural issues, such as poor governance and corruption, which discourage investment in security technologies. Procurement procedures for security technologies are compromised in the absence of open and accountable frameworks, leading to inadequate or unsuitable equipment that does not satisfy operational requirements. The establishment of a strong and responsive security infrastructure is made difficult by this institutional deficiency, which also deters cooperation with foreign partners and private sector technology companies that might otherwise help with security technology capacity growth. The neglect of technology by the state and the resulting weaknesses in security have a significant impact on South-East peace and stability. In addition to limiting its own ability to uphold law and order, the state's failure to adopt technological innovation encourages the emergence of sacred security measures that cannot be scientifically sound. Addressing this issue calls for a thorough rethinking of security policy that prioritizes technological advancement as a pillar of sustainable security, integrates contemporary technology and encourages institutional reforms.

#### **Summary of Findings Based on Questionnaire Responses (N = 120) on Faith-Based and Technological Security in South-East Nigeria.**

| <b>Question</b>                                                                  | <b>Response Option</b>       | <b>Frequency</b> | <b>Percentage (%)</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Religious Affiliation</b>                                                     | Christianity                 | 65               | 54.2%                 |
|                                                                                  | African Traditional Religion | 40               | 33.3%                 |
|                                                                                  | Islam                        | 15               | 12.5%                 |
|                                                                                  |                              |                  |                       |
| <b>Q1: Do you think technological tools are more effective than faith-based?</b> | Strongly Agree               | 20               | 16.7%                 |
|                                                                                  | Agree                        | 76               | 63.3%                 |
|                                                                                  | Neutral                      | 12               | 10%                   |
|                                                                                  | Disagree                     | 9                | 7.5%                  |
|                                                                                  | Strongly Disagree            | 3                | 2.5%                  |
| <b>Q2: Do you support government investing in tech security over religious?</b>  | Yes                          | 96               | 80%                   |
|                                                                                  | No                           | 12               | 10%                   |
|                                                                                  | Not Sure                     | 12               | 10%                   |
| <b>Q3: Which do you trust more for community protection?</b>                     | Technological Solutions      | 82               | 68.3%                 |
|                                                                                  | Faith-Based Methods          | 18               | 15%                   |
|                                                                                  | Both Equally                 | 12               | 10%                   |
|                                                                                  | Neither                      | 8                | 6.7%                  |

A summary of the hypothetical responses from 120 participants shows a range of opinions about the role of technology and religion in community safety. Christians made up the largest percentage of respondents (54.2%), followed by adherents of African Traditional Religion (33.3%) and Muslims (12.5%). When asked whether technology is more effective than faith-based solutions, the majority of respondents agreed (63.3%) or strongly agreed (16.7%) that technology is more successful. Just 10% opposed government investment in technical security, although a huge 80% backed it over religious alternatives. Overall, the data suggests a strong preference for technological approaches in community safety, despite the varied religious backgrounds of participants.

## **Implications and Consequences**

**Social Implications and Consequences** – Communities' social structure has been altered by the dependence on sacralized security mechanisms, which reinforce traditional authority structures and rituals as the main means of defense. As societies see vulnerability through spiritual lenses, faith-based security measures become more important than formal or technical alternatives. This leads to a collective social psychology that complicates evidence-based remedies and influences collective reactions by seeing criminal dangers as demonic or metaphysical rather than material or systematic. It also strengthens dependence on religious leaders, excluding institutional and scientific views from public debate. It was on this view that Kinnvall (2004), wrote that using nationalist and religious myths and traumas to increase ontological security for one individual or group is likely to reduce security for those excluded from the nationalist and/or religious discourse. This approach creates a dual social reality in which official law enforcement and traditional/religious actors collide as state-approved security systems coexist alongside unofficial faith-based alternatives. Local communities are compelled to increase their investments in community watch systems, spiritual vows, and religious surveillance mechanisms that lack accountability or supervision as a result of the decline in faith in governmental capability. As a result, those who do not fit in with the prevailing religious standards or who doubt the effectiveness of spiritual security practices might become stigmatized or socially excluded.

The prevalence of faith-based solutions may be difficult for younger, more technologically inclined people to reconcile with their knowledge of international best practices in security technology. When data-driven security solutions are neglected, it leads to a cultural gap that hinders the growth of critical thinking and creativity in threat mitigation. The sacralization of security reduces funding in technologically enabled and sustainable safety infrastructures.

**Political Implications and Consequences** - Politically, the presence of ritualized security measures in Southeast Nigeria underscores the declining confidence of the government and its institutions in ensuring public safety. Political accountability is undermined when ineffective security agencies are replaced by religious leaders and institutions. In order to win political favor, elected officials could take advantage of the popularity of religious security leaders and side with them rather than funding public works projects and security reform. According to Kratochwil (2013), sacralization is the practice of making something "sacred" in order to elevate it beyond routine political discussion while yet allowing political actors to use it as a source of legitimacy. "Sacred" has historically been "a source of legitimacy for political rule, while at the same time remaining always beyond politics and law." The acceptance of sacralized security creates uncertainty in the administration of public order, since spiritual claims restrict the rule of law. Allegations of witchcraft, divine retribution, or spiritual assaults could have an impact on the legal system, opening the door for extrajudicial rulings, mob justice, or unjust punishments. Politicians

can resort to beliefs as a tool to quell opposition or defend inactivity, thus delegating their constitutional duties to spiritual leaders who are exempted from public scrutiny. Faith-based structures can gain symbolic authority in communities where the state is seen as weak or ineffective, but they lack the financial means to maintain long-term security plans. National unity is put at risk, and regional security cooperation is made more difficult by the resulting power vacuum and authority breakdown, which weaken state sovereignty.

**Psychological Implications and Consequences** - In terms of psychology, recognizing ritualized security procedures creates a mentality that is characterized by spiritual anxiety, dread, and irrational. According to Glas&Poort (2007), some research indicates a connection between religion and elevated anxiety. And that some of them concentrate on external religious practices. Their research indicates that those who are more religious have higher levels of anxiety. Individuals who are conditioned to see all threats as spiritual in nature rather than physical are prone to mistakes or institutionalized weaknesses. This encourages psychological reliance on religious leaders for protection and direction, depriving people of the ability to acquire vital security awareness or useful self-defense techniques. In times of uncertainty, it can also increase mental stress and emotional instability due to the underdevelopment of reasonable coping systems.

The psychological advantages of contemporary safety precautions like monitoring, alarms, and digital early warning systems are not well known when technology participation is neglected in favor of spirituality. People who live in situations where sacralized security is the norm can feel insecure all the time since spiritual practices usually don't work or provide predictable results. Following violent attacks or security breaches, collective trauma gets worse and fear is encouraged by the unforeseen probability of results. When societies turn to rituals, rituals of cleansing, or mass prayers in place of coordinated proactive measures during times of crisis, the spiritualization of security can result in public panic or collective hallucination. Although religion can offer psychological comfort, excessive use of it without logical protections could worsen psychological vulnerability and prolong important reactions. Over time, this kind of thinking hinders mental toughness, societal rehabilitation, and the incorporation of demonstrated emotional support, leaving communities psychologically vulnerable and ill-equipped to handle contemporary security threats.

**Security Implications and Consequences** - Although, Boscaglia, Clarke, Jobling& Quinn (2005) write that **spirituality was found to be favorably correlated with psychosocial adjustment and anxiety. This** means that people who are more spiritual (such as those who pray, meditate, or feel connected to something greater than themselves) usually adjust better socially and emotionally. However, the overreliance on sacralized security can provide psychological assurance but lack the capacity to deter or respond effectively to modern threats. By prioritizing spiritual protections over institutional security systems, communities create gaps in surveillance, intelligence gathering, and coordinated responses to violence, thereby increasing their vulnerability. This dependence has many effects, one of which is the decline of confidence in official state security organizations. After seeing the ineffectiveness or corruption of the military and police, a lot of people turn to faith-based alternatives as a means of cultural affirmation and resistance. Although this could foster a feeling of unity among communities, it also keeps these communities off from national security networks and hinders the development of cooperative security frameworks. Additionally, this distance makes it more difficult for law enforcement to get reliable information, which makes attempts to prevent and respond to crimes more difficult.

The long-term growth and modernization of the region's security infrastructure are jeopardized by the technical negligence that goes hand in hand with sacralized security. The region

continues to be unprepared to handle new security threats due to a lack of investment in digital crime monitoring tools, emergency communication systems, and surveillance innovations. Potential investors and development partners may see the area as unstable and uncooperative, which deters social and economic advancement in addition to sustaining instability. The dominance of faith-based security over formal and technology alternatives ultimately has major consequences for regional peace, government, and development, even while it meets cultural and spiritual demands.

### **Beyond Prayer: The Religious Use of Policing and Intelligence**

While religious organizations are mostly recognized for their spiritual functions, they have been taking more proactive steps to combat community insecurity. Despite their effectiveness in promoting hope and solidarity, these organizations acknowledge that religious rituals and prayers may not be enough to address tangible concerns like crime, violence, or political problems. Some religious organizations have responded to this by implementing proactive measures, such as tight coordination with security services and even the creation of internal monitoring systems. For instance, Maurutto (1997) write that the Catholic Church was using a number of strategies to avoid what seemed to be danger. It received covert Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) reports and intelligence from the Red Squad. These activities were significantly more than just religious preaching. Operating independently of law enforcement but entwined with governmental political agendas, the Church's tactics amounted to active monitoring and surveillance of people. To get intelligence reports or updates on possible threats, religious organizations often stay in touch with law enforcement. Winship & Berrien (1999) advocated that police and religious groups working together can successfully enhance the well-being of the community. Some churches, for example, have been known to get information from security or police networks, which allow them to keep an eye out for suspicious activities in their surrounds or among their members. These initiatives transcend spiritual leadership and delve into the field of social policing, in which religious leaders serve as unofficial security agents, actively monitoring and collaborating with the government to ensure the safety of their adherents. In order to protect places of worship and community hubs, religious organizations can also conduct neighborhood watch programs, train security guards, or install surveillance equipment. A more comprehensive view of security that incorporates both spiritual and material aspects is shown in this mix of holy duty and useful protection. It emphasizes how religious groups are prepared to take concrete steps to support their faith-based strategies in an effort to safeguard their communities, showing that prayer and vigilance often go hand in hand.

Religious organizations continue to be important foundations of community life in the South-East area of Nigeria, where insecurity has been worsened by separatist agitations, armed groups, and an increase in criminal activity. Prayers, fasting, and spiritual rites are the traditional ways that churches, mosques, and other traditional religious organizations handle crises. But a more comprehensive approach is necessary given the region's increasing instability. In order to protect their adherents and the communities around them, religious organizations can further their role by collaborating with law enforcement, actively participating in community-based monitoring, and putting internal security measures in place. In addition to praying, religious organizations can collaborate with local vigilante groups and the Nigeria Police Force to develop early warning systems and get information about possible threats. On this backdrop, Scheitle (2018) suggested that in order to prevent and respond to crimes, it is essential for houses of worship and the police to have great working collaborations. For instance, religious elders and church leaders, who often have the community's confidence, might function as a liaison between the public and security personnel, promoting information exchange and reporting any questionable activity or movements. In places where there is little or no government presence, such cooperation may improve security coverage by bridging the gap between official police and grassroots communities. Additionally, houses of

worship may implement doable security measures like installing CCTV cameras, educating internal security volunteers, and setting up member security awareness campaigns. By doing this, religious institutions take concrete measures to shield their followers from violence and disturbance in addition to meeting spiritual demands. In the South-East, this integrated strategy which combines religion with proactive security engagement can significantly contribute to lowering anxiety, discouraging criminal activity, and fostering peace.

## **Conclusion**

This study critically examined the phenomenon of sacralized security in Southeast Nigeria, where governments as well as non-governmental organizations are neglecting technology, leading to the normalization of faith-based responses to insecurity, including prayer vigils, anointing rituals, and prophetic declarations. The results show that many communities have resorted to religious organizations as alternative security providers as well as spiritual havens in response to growing concerns such as kidnap, banditry, unknown gunmen and inter-communal conflict. This reliance on faith highlights the people's enduring religious beliefs and resilience, but it also highlights institutional weaknesses in implementing contemporary technological solutions like digital communication networks, forensic tools, and surveillance systems which are all essential for proactive and efficient security management. The spiritual interventions lack the investigative and preventative power to deter criminal conduct, an over-reliance on sacralized techniques, despite their cultural significance, runs the danger of prolonging a cycle of vulnerability. The study also emphasizes the critical need for legislative changes and deliberate funding for technologically advanced security infrastructure that enhances rather than replaces the socio-religious systems already in place in the area. The only way Southeast Nigeria can expect to address its complex security concerns in a sustainable manner is by implementing an integrated security framework that strikes a balance between religious agency and contemporary technology capabilities.

## **Recommendations**

**Enhancing State Security Infrastructure** - To improve crime prevention and response in Southeast Nigeria, government and security services have to make investments in data-driven intelligence systems and contemporary surveillance technology. By doing this, the public's trust in official security institutions will be restored and an excessive dependence on faith-based security measures will be lessened.

**Fostering Religion–State Collaboration** - Religious organizations and government should work together to raise awareness of the limits of sacralized security. For more effective community protection, these collaborations may assist in combining evidence-based security measures with spiritual teachings.

**Reforming Community Policing Through Technology** - Comprehensive security sector changes are required, with a focus on community-based police aided by technology technologies like emergency response applications, CCTV, and drones. This strategy may help close the gap between contemporary enforcement methods and established trust networks.

**Promoting Research and Advocacy** - The consequences of technological neglect in regional security frameworks should be the subject of ongoing study and advocacy by academic institutions and civil society organizations. These initiatives can encourage the adoption of technology and inform the creation of policies.

**Empowering Youth with Tech Skills** - Digital surveillance, cyber security, and other pertinent technology skills should be taught to young people in Southeast Nigeria. Giving local communities access to technological know-how can enhance their collective resilience against instability and build grassroots capacity for self-monitoring.

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