

# Felson and Cohens` Routine Activity Theory and Waves of Kidnapping in Nigeria: A Theoretical Exploration of Criminal Enterprise

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## Abstract

Kidnapping is a global issue that affects every aspect of human endeavour. This violent crime is linked to wide spread unemployment, poor governance, border insecurity, illegal possession of arms and ammunitions. Kidnapping for ransom has consequences for global peace and security. In Nigeria, kidnapping creates apprehension in almost all spheres of human endeavors. It leads to loss of lives and properties, death, loss of investment, reduced educational standard and diversion of government from critical areas. The previous studies have not been able to deal with this area. To address inadequate literature on kidnapping and improve on the body of knowledge, this study addresses Marcus Felson routine activity and waves of kidnapping. The study adopts qualitative research method. Data was obtained secondarily through the content analysis of peer-reviewed journals, edited book chapters, newspaper reports and credible online sources. Findings show kidnappers who were the motivated offenders, adopted their victims because of adequate protection. The paper recommends adequate electronic security by government at all levels. This paper will be significant to individuals, employers, security organizations, government at various levels, non-governmental organizations and researcher's in the field of social and management sciences.

**Keywords:** Abduction, Criminality, Opportunities, Organized Crime, Security, Violence

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## INTRODUCTION

The world is battling with high incidences of criminalities. One of these criminal acts is kidnapping. Different scholars have devised various definitions to kidnapping. As explained by the United Nations, cited in Adeniran, kidnapping is a violent crime whereby people are adopted, transported and incarcerated.<sup>1</sup> In this criminal activity, a person is denied freedom and subjected to subhuman conditions.<sup>2</sup> The history of kidnapping in Nigeria could be traced to agitations in the Niger Delta in the early 2000s. The environmental activists expressed their grievances by kidnaping oil workers and subsequently forcing their employers and government representatives to negotiation table. The trends continue in other parts of the country. The Islamic Terrorist Group also called Boko Haram indulges in kidnapping from 2009 until date. They use kidnapping as a strategy to force government and individuals to pay ransom as condition for the abductees to regain freedom.

The abduction of 270 girls in Chibok Secondary School in 2014 received international attention.<sup>3</sup> The mass abduction led to perpetual agony for the victims` immediate family, since then mass abduction is on the increase in Nigeria. The Northeast is worst hit by this criminal activity. According to the United Nation Educational, Cultural Scientific Organanisation (2021) more than 950 pupils have been abducted in the Nigeria in 2021<sup>4</sup>. This development is a cause for concern for the stakeholders. The mass abduction of students led to closure of some boarding schools in the Northern Nigeria.<sup>5</sup> This worsens the low enrolment in that part of the country.

The activities of kidnappers led to displacement of most residents thereby increasing the burdens on the government. For instance, huge amount is been spent on the management of over 2,184,254 internally displayed persons (IDPs) in the Northeast Nigeria (International Organization for Migration, 2021)<sup>6</sup>. The kidnappers do not spare students; most students have lost their lives to kidnappers. For instance, six students of Greenfield University in Kaduna were killed after abduction in April, 2021,<sup>7</sup> In the process, some families were traumatized and dejected. There is pervasive apprehension in the dangerous areas. Aside school massive kidnapping, other way through which kidnapers perpetrate mass adoption is highway abduction of travelers.<sup>8</sup> Many interstate commuters have fell victims of abductors. The hot spots are Abuja- Kaduna Expressway,

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<sup>1</sup> A. Adeniran, *Student kidnapping Threatening Nigeria Education*; UNESCO, 2021

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/education-plus-development/2021/04/19/student-kidnappings-threaten-collapse-of-nigerian-education-system/>

<sup>2</sup> N.S Akpan,. Kidnapping in Nigeria's Niger Delta: an exploratory study. *Journal of Social Science* 24(1): 2010, 33–42

<sup>3</sup> N.Musa, *Taraba Monarch Ultimatum Unsettles Security Agencies*. *The Guardian* pg. 1-2, July 27, 2021

<sup>4</sup> United Nation Organization (2021), UNO Chief Call for immediate release of abducted Children in Nigeria. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/12/1079942>

<sup>5</sup> A.Adeyemi, *Despite Security Concerns, FG again extends NIN-SIM link deadline by three months*, the Guardian, 2021, pg. 1—2

<sup>6</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/northeast-nigeria-displacement-report-36-may-2021>

<sup>7</sup> K. Tolu, & Isenyo, G.I. Bandits Kill Nine in Fresh Southern Kaduna attacks. *The Punch Newspaper*, pg. 8, July 13, 2021

<sup>8</sup> T. C Hart, Rennison, C. M., & Miethe, T. D. Identifying patterns of situational clustering and contextual variability in criminological data: An overview of conjunctive analysis of case configurations. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 33, 2017, 112-120.

Benue – Lokoja, Expressway, Oyo-Iseyin Expressway and Lagos- Ibadan Expressway, Ikere-Ado-Ekiti Expressway and others.

In this research, the application of the theory of crimes will explore the three principles of motivated offenders, available targets and availability of guidance. The main thrust of Felson theory of crime is that for deviant behaviour to be successful, three conditions must be in place. These are motivated offenders, presence of targets and availability of guidance. There are many theoretical discourses on Felson`s theory. There are a number of studies on Routine Activities Theory and deviant behaviour. Rossmo & Summers (2015), investigated Routine Activity Theory in crime investigation<sup>9</sup>, Jiag, Mak, Zhung, Larsen & Webster (2018) examined from broken windows to perceived Routine Activities: examining impacts of environmental interventions on perceived safety of urban alleys<sup>10</sup>.Rutger & Yar, (2016), assessed the application of Routine Activity Theory to cybercrime<sup>11</sup>. From the knowledge of the researcher, no study has investigated the application of Routine Activity Theory to kidnapping in Nigeria. Hence, this study is necessary to fill the knowledge gap.

### **Objectives of the Paper**

The overall objective of the paper is to explain kidnapping by using Routine Activity Theory by Cohen Lawrence and Felson Marcus. The specific objectives are to:

- i. Examine the major constituents of Routine Activity Theory
- ii. Apply the theory in explaining kidnapping
- iii. Apply the theory also in prognosticating the effects of kidnapping.
- iv. Appraise the Routine Activity Theory as a tool of explaining kidnapping

### **Research Questions**

- i. What is the relationship between Routine Activity Theory and kidnapping?
- ii. What are the causes of kidnapping?
- iii. What are the effects of kidnapping?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The paper made use of the content analysis of peer reviewed journals, edited books and credible online resources. Cohen Lawrence and Marcus Felson adopted the systemic literature to unravel. The thrusts of routine activity theory. The research further dwells on meanings of kidnapping, reasons for kidnapping and policy implications of kidnapping in Nigeria.

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<sup>9</sup> D.K., Rossmo, & Summers, L. *Routine Activity Theory in Crime Investigation*. In Andersen, M.A, M.A Farell, G.(eds). The Criminal Act. Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2015

<sup>10</sup> B.Jiang, Mac, C.N. S, Zhung, H. Larsen, Webster, C.J. From Broken Windows to Routine Activities: Examining Impacts of Environmental Interventions on Perceived Safety of Urban Alleys. *Frontier Psychology*, 2018, 9(250)

<sup>11</sup> E.R.Leukfeldt, & Yar, M. Applying Routine Activity Theory to Cybercrime: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis. *Journal of Deviant Behaviour*. 37(3), 2016, 263—280

## Definitions of Concepts

**Routine Activity Theory.** Marcus Felson and James Cohen to explain the relationship between crimes and situational factors propounded this theory. According to Cohen and Felson, cited in Rossmo & Summers, (2015), deviance or criminal activity is a function of changing lifestyles and population behaviour. Invariably, crimes depend on time and place. As proposed by Cohen and Marcus, the three factors that are responsible for deviance are availability of motivated offenders, presence of targets and availability and non-availability of guardianship.<sup>12</sup>

**The motivated offenders.** These are those who want to steal or commit other deviance. This could be individual or group of people. However, for organized crime such as kidnapping, ransom payable is predominant. There are many factors that motivate one to engage in deviance. These factors are poverty, unemployment, peer pressure, harsh economic environment and other unpalatable social objectivity.

**Availability of Target.** When motivated offenders are on the ground, other social determinant of deviance is availability of targets. The targets in this sense are the people that motivated offenders want to abduct. The market value or the inherent gain of the targets determines desperation of the motivated offenders to commit deviance at a particular period. For instance, armed robbers are desperate to be successful by getting rid of anybody that obstructs their bank robbery operations.<sup>13</sup>

**Non-Availability of Guardianship.** The type of security provided for properties or persons encourages or discourages motivated offenders from meeting the targets. When the security around a particular object or person is tight, it would be very difficult or impossible for motivated offenders to succeed. The guardianship around targets could be security personnel, security alarm system, biometric access control, closed circuit television camera, (CCTV) invader alarm system and other security mechanisms.<sup>14</sup> The availability of guardianship may translate to security of lives and properties. When the available security structures are not well equipped to provide the necessary protection, the properties or persons may be in serious danger.

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<sup>12</sup> Op.Cit., Rossmo and Summers

<sup>13</sup> J.A.Wilsem “Worlds Tied Together? Online and Non-Domestic Routine Activities and Their Impact on Digital and Traditional Threat Victimization.” *European Journal of Criminology* 8(2), 2011, 115–127.

<sup>14</sup> J. Galt, *The Lost Girls. The True Story of the Cleveland Abduction and Incredible Rescue of Michele*. Street Martin’s Press, 2015, 234(44)

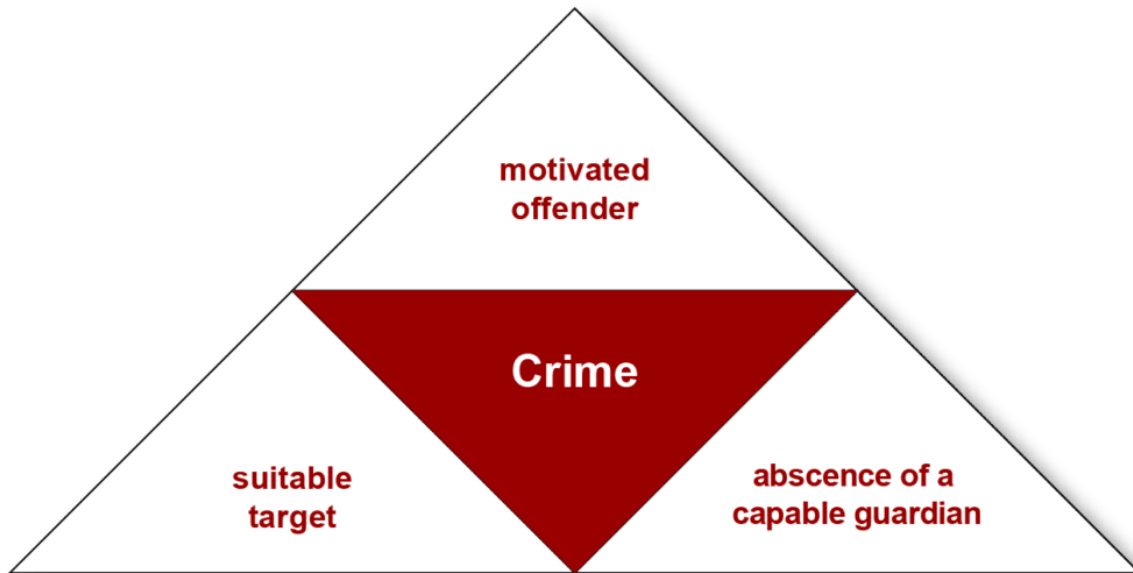


Figure 1: Routine Activity Theory's Model  
Source: Adapted from Soz Theory of Deviance (2020)

Figure 1 displays the three variables which are dependent of time and place. These determinants are the motivated offenders, suitable targets and lack of capable security structures. As per kidnapping, motivated offenders are the unemployed youths or kidnapping gangs that are desperately looking for ways to make money through kidnapping. The targets could be school children, rich personalities, business tycoons, expatriates, children from wealthy homes. The guardianship is the security around properties or persons.

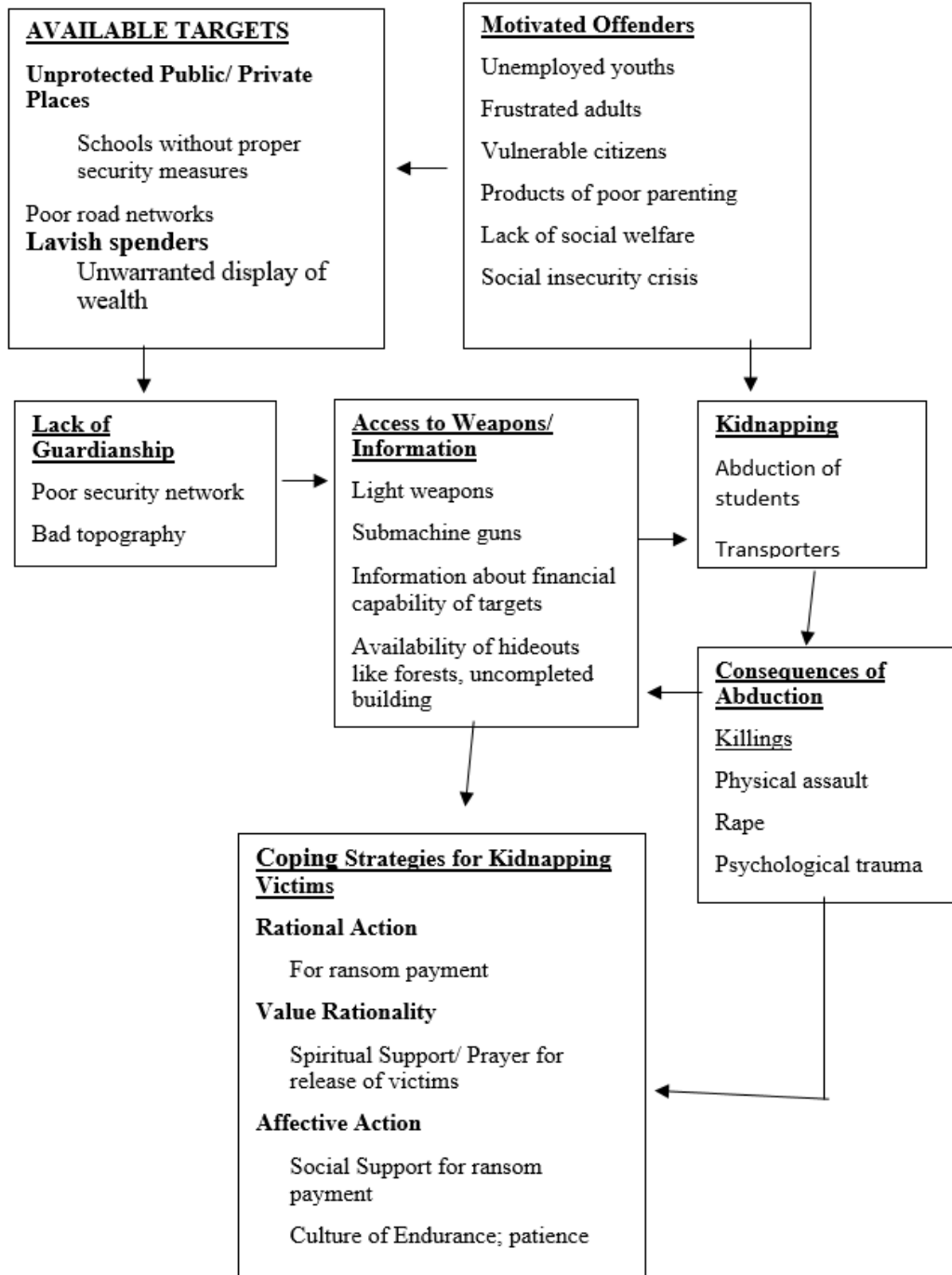


Figure 2: Conceptual Framework  
 Source: Adopted from Marcus, Shanhe, and Yanging (2020)

From Figure 2, unemployed youths and other disgruntled people are the motivated offenders. Eminent personalities, their children and relatives are the targets of kidnappers. The kidnappers may succeed if the well-to-do individuals are not protected. Kidnapping has physical and psychological effects on the victims and their relatives. The coping strategies involved contribution for payment of ransom. Religious commitment serves as coping strategies.

## Kidnapping

This is a criminal act that involves denying somebody freedom to normal life processes. Kidnaping is a dangerous crime that is assuming unprecedented proportion in Nigeria. According to the United Nations Organizations (2021), and supported by Gbedi, 2021, kidnapping is a daily event in Nigeria.

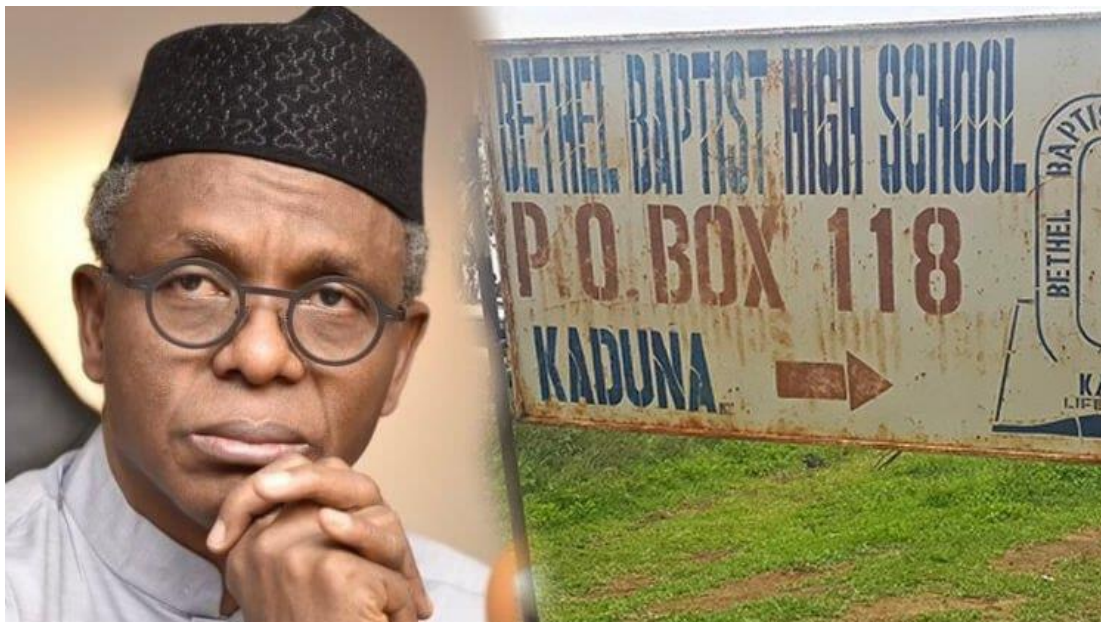


Figure 3: The insert is Kaduna State Governor overwhelmed by spate of kidnapping in the state. Source: <https://punchng.com/kidnapped-bethel-baptist-high-school-students-freed/>

The insert is the picture of the governor of Kaduna State, Mallam Nasiru El Rufai. as a governor of the state, his primary responsibility is the protection of lives and property. However, the wave of kidnapping in Kaduna gives the governor sleepless nights. There have been series of kidnapping in Kaduna State; the latest one orchestrated was carried out on July 5, 2021. On this day, 121 students from Bethel Baptist High School, Damishin, Kaduna were abducted around 2:00am in the midnight. The kidnappers demanded for a ransom of #100million, after series of negotiations it was reduce to #30million.

### Causes of Kidnapping.

The following social and economic factors are recognize as the causes of kidnaping in Nigeria.

**Youth Unemployment.** According to the National Bureau of Statistics (2021), the rate of unemployment in Nigeria is at 36%. Youths from 20 to 45 years have the largest proportion of the unemployment rate in the country.<sup>15</sup> Unemployment breeds poverty and when, people are

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<sup>15</sup> National Bureau of Statistics (2021)

extremely poor, they indulge in criminal activities for survival. The increasing rate of kidnapping for ransom is attached to the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria.<sup>16</sup>

**Proliferation of small and light weapons.** According to World Bank (2020), Africa has the largest number of illegal weapons like light arms and guns. There are more than two million light weapons illegally acquired over the globe.<sup>17</sup> The position of Nigeria with warring nations in Africa like Somalia, Libya and others worsens arm trafficking in Nigeria. The kidnapers use the illegally possessed weapons to force their victims into captivity.<sup>18</sup>

**Porous Border.** There are numerous uncontrolled or illegal borders in the country. The illegal ones are not properly monitored. Weak security structures pave the way for illegal migration of kidnapers from the Niger Republic under the guise of cattle rearing.<sup>19</sup>

**Security Intelligence Failure.** Intelligence is the process of getting information, processing information, making information available to appropriate security outfits for necessary actions with expected feedback. The prolonged police brutality and gross abuse of power is responsible for seamless lack of intelligence as well as frequent intelligence failure. Poor handling of sensitive information in the security circle contributes to the disheartening kidnapping trends in Nigeria.<sup>20</sup>

**Poor Governance.** The governing of the country is been handled with levity over a period. The return of the country to democratically elected government since 1999 has not met the people expectations in terms of infrastructural development. This widens the gaps between the rich and poor.<sup>21</sup>

**Corruption in Handling Security Vote.** In every year, there is a statutory budgetary allocation to every security outfit. This covers the purchase of sophisticated weapons, training and retraining of security personnel. However, improper monitoring through effective probity and accountability undermines the aims and objectives of the security vote.<sup>22</sup>

**Inadequate Number of Security Personnel.** The Nigerian population increases on daily basis; new settlements spring up and the existing ones expands through conurbation.<sup>23</sup> However, the number of security personnel diminishes due to retirement, death and dismissal from service. This

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<sup>16</sup> R.Ede, Arrest *Unemployment, poverty, free Kanu ,Mbaka Tells Federal Government.*, The Punch Newspaper, pg. 1—2, July 13, 2021

<sup>17</sup> R.Williams, The psychological consequences for children of mass violence, terrorism and disasters. *Int Rev Psychiatric.* 2007; 19:263–77

<sup>18</sup> G.I.Isengo, *Kidnapers free 85-year old Kaduna Emir, bandits hold wives, grandchildren.* The Punch Newspaper, pg. 8, July 13, 2021

<sup>19</sup> J.U.Yakubu, & Bello, M.M. Kidnapping and Hostage Taking; an Emerging Issue in Security in Katsina State. *Journal of Advancement in Social Science and Humanities.* 6 (30), 2020, 32—53

<sup>20</sup> K.Aliyu, Sunday, A.O., & Adah, C. Kidnapping in Nigeria: Dimensions, Causes and Consequences. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Reviews*, 12(4), 2020, 34—53

<sup>21</sup> G.Victor, *Bad Roads threatens Songo Ota property Market Industrial Estates*, pg. 19, July 26, 2021

<sup>22</sup> C.Achebe, *There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra.* London: Pearson, 2012

<sup>23</sup> O.O. Akanji, Security crisis in Nigeria: Boko Haram insurgency and the prospects of peace. *Conflict Studies Quarterly* [Special Issue], 2015, 58–73

creates serious gaps in the national security. Kidnappers take advantage of this to unleash terror on the masses.<sup>24</sup>

**Ethnicity:** Nigeria has more than 250 ethnic groups, in addition to Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba which constitute the major ethnic groups in Nigeria. Some of the handlers of security forces find it extremely difficult to divorce ethnic interests from national interests. This led to biased and unpopular decisions at the detriment of national security. The government in power shield his clans that are committing kidnapping.<sup>25</sup>

**Poor Deployment of digital security.** The application of information communication technology to national security is below expectation. Despite appreciable level of computer literacy and internet connectivity, the application of ICT resources is low. This is responsible for inability of the security personnel to trace the identity of abductors during voice to calls to kidnap victim's relatives to negotiate ransom. The NIN-SIM Data base has been suffering from consistent policy.<sup>26</sup>

**Criminal Justice System.** Independent and equitable criminal justice system is crucial to winning war against kidnapping and bandit. The few arrests made on kidnap suspects have not been subjected to thorough and impartial criminal justice system. This reduces public confidence in the ability of government to curb kidnapping with the seriousness it deserves.<sup>27</sup>

**Lack of Political Will.** The government's lack of decisive policy and weak commitment to checkmate kidnapping is a major setback for the collaborations against kidnapping in Nigeria. The government at the centre shows infirm political will to curb kidnapping. This is demonstrated in their willingness to negotiate with kidnappers to secure the release of kidnap victims.

**Politicization of national security.** There is persistent infiltration of party politics into national security architecture. The appointment, promotion and general discipline is conducted along party-politics. This erodes discipline and efficiency among security operatives. Discipline is a yardstick for the success of any security programme.

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<sup>24</sup> V.Ayeni, *Lagos Assembly, Abiara, all for State Police*, The Punch Newspaper, pg. 1—2, July 13, 2021

<sup>25</sup> M.Felson, & Boba, R. L. *Crime and everyday life (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2010

<sup>26</sup> A. Adepegba, Nnodim, L., Okechukwu, A., & Isengo, G. *Bandits Expose SIM-NIN Linkage Failure, Police cannot Track gunmen*. The Punch Newspaper, pg. 1—2, July 13, 2021

<sup>27</sup>R. Bucchino, *Domestic violence cases surge amid stay-at-home orders*. The Hill. 2020 Retrieved from <https://thehill.com/homenews/news/492506-domestic-violence-cases-surge-amid-stay-at-home-orders>. and also

Lockwood, K., Hart, T. C., & Stewart, A. First Nations Peoples and judicial sentencing: Main effects and the impact of contextual variability. *British Journal of Criminology*, 55, 2015, 769- 789.



**Low Level of Educational Development.** As established by SB Intelligence (2021), and supported by Akasike and Adelekan (2010) more than 500 students were kidnapped from their dormitories in the first half of 2021.<sup>31</sup> The teachers were, not left out of the kidnapping tragic scenarios. The persistent kidnapping forced Niger State Governor to close down some boarding-secondary schools early this year to prevent kidnapping of students.

**Dwindling Investment.** Investment does not thrive where there is lack of peace and harmony. Kidnapping discourages investment in hotspot areas. The small and medium scale business enterprises are affected, because of their inability to provide the necessary security.<sup>32</sup>

**Warped and Negative National Image:** The national image has been traumatized by high incidence of kidnapping in Nigeria. The nation is put into a state of disrepute at regional and international level. The citizens of Nigeria are subjected to thorough security checks at entry points at international borders. Some are humiliated in the process.<sup>33</sup>

**National Disintegration.** As opined by Aghedo (2013), the incessant kidnapping by a particular clan in a country threatens national unity and harmony.<sup>34</sup> The perceived government inability to curb kidnapping and encouraging windows for negotiation with kidnapers do not go well with particular ethnic nationalities. This warranted the re-emergence of separatist groups like Yoruba Nation Agitation. The Independent State of Biafra and the Ijaw Nations. The agitation for independent states is responsible for series of clashes with security personnel, which heightens national insecurity.<sup>35</sup>

**Threats to Democracy.** The major responsibility of any government is provision of security of lives and properties. One of the reasons for past military incursion in politics was inability of the then civilian administration to provide dividends of democracy in terms of critical infrastructural development, friendly economy and security.<sup>36</sup>

### **Application of Routine Activity Theory to Understanding and Mitigation of Kidnapping**

The three assumptions of routine activity theory are; motivated offenders, suitable targets and lack of guidance or protection. The motivated offenders are the kidnap syndicates that are bent on abducting unsuspected member of public for money or other dangerous motives.<sup>37</sup> The lack of protection around their targets enhance the success of the motivated offenders. In the first instance, proper motivation of unemployed youths and other vulnerable members of society will discourage

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<sup>31</sup> C. Akasike, & Adelekan, A. Back from the kidnapers' den. *The Punch*, 19 July 2010, p. 3

<sup>32</sup> Op.Cit, Victor, G.

<sup>33</sup> M. Williams, "The Virtual Neighborhood Watch: Netizens in Action." Pp. 562–581 in *Handbook of Internet Crime*, edited by Y. Jewkes and M. Yar. Cullompton: Willan, 2010

<sup>34</sup> I. Aghedo, Winning the war, losing the peace: amnesty and the challenges in the Niger Delta, Nigeria. *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 48(3): 2013, 267–280.

<sup>35</sup> C.Byers, When activity declines, so does crime: How the coronavirus pandemic is impacting crime in the St. Louis area, 2020, KSDK News website. Retrieved April 1, from <https://www.ksdk.com/article/news/crime/coronavirus-impact-on-crime-st-louis/63-a2915ecf-8d37-4bab-9de5-0798984e685b>

<sup>36</sup> Op.Cit., Adeyemi, 2021

<sup>37</sup> F.Marcus, Shanhe, J., and Yanging, X. Routine Activity Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Burglary in Detroit. *Crime Science*, 9(10), 2020

them from engaging in kidnapping.<sup>38</sup> Aside motivation of disgruntled members of societies, another method of checking kidnapping is provision adequate security for individuals. This security method could be formal and inform security mechanisms like community policing. The flashy areas could be provided with enough security in order to foil attack on them. And the security could be beef-up in states with high incidences of kidnapping.<sup>39</sup> This will among other things gives the people enough protection and rest of mind to go about their normal activities



Figure 5: Picture of parents protesting the abduction of 118 students from Baptist Secondary School in Kaduna

Source: Source: <https://thenationonline.net/video->

From Figure 5 above, the parents were protesting the abduction of their children from Bethel Baptist High School in Kaduna. In the mid-night of July 5, 2021, the kidnappers stormed the school and took away 121 students.<sup>40</sup> This created psychological issues for the embattled parents and the country at large.

**Table 1: Kidnapping in the First Half of 2021**

S/N	Month	Kidnapping	Percentage (%)	Positions
1	January	277	11.68	5 <sup>th</sup>
2	February	605	25.52	1 <sup>st</sup>
3	March	534	22.52	2 <sup>nd</sup>
4	April	316	13.33	3 <sup>rd</sup>
5	May	355	14.97	4 <sup>th</sup>
6	June	284	11.98	6 <sup>th</sup>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: Adapted from Agbakwuru, and Ibrahim, 2021)

<sup>38</sup> B.Aurora, *Willing Captive*, BOOFGFY154. New York, 2014 AND also Saxome, A., Alabi, A., Adewale, M. & Idris, A.B., *Security foils crash on Emir Bayero`s Convoy*, The Guardian, pg. 6, July 27, 2021

<sup>39</sup> Op.Cit., Jiang, Mac and ZHUNG, Larse and Webster, 2018; Leukfeldt and Yar, 2016

<sup>40</sup> G. Isenyo, Olugbemi, A., & Dogara, B. *Baptist School Students: Kaduna Bandits collect N50m ransom, hold back 87 students*, the Punch, 2021, pg. 1—2

## A Theoretical Exploration of Criminal Enterprise

From Table 1 above, in the first half of 2021, the month of February recorded the highest number of kidnapping which was 605 or 25.5% of the kidnappings in the period under review. Followed by the month of March, which had 534 or 22.52% of the kidnapping, and June has the least 284 or 11.98% of the total number of kidnapping. The subsequent reduction of kidnap rate might due to intervention forces to alleviate the crime.

**Table 2: Kidnapping by States in the First Half of 2021**

S/N	STATE	KIDNAPPING	PERCENTAGE
	Niger	643	27.12
	Zamfara	519	21.89
	Kaduna	360	15.18
1	Abia	6	0.25
2.	Abuja(Federal Capital Territory)	50	2.11
3.	Akwa Ibom	2	0.08
4.	Anambra	14	0.59
5	Bauchi	3	0.13
6	Bayelsa	7	0.30
7	Benue	6	0.25
8	Borno	1	0.04
9	Cross River	4	0.17
10	Delta	51	2.15
11	Ebonyi	5	0.21
12	Edo	18	0.76
13	Ekiti	14	0.59
14	Enugu	15	0.63
15	Gombe	1	0.04
16	Imo	25	1.05
17	Jigawa	2	0.08
18	Kano	3	0.13
19	Katsina	236	9.95
20	Kebbi	81	3.42
21	Kogi	31	1.31
22	Kwara	10	0.42
23	Lagos	6	0.25
24	Nasarawa	44	1.86
25	Ogun	26	1.10
26	Ondo	17	0.72
27	Osun	23	0.97
28	Oyo	61	2.57
29	Plateau	10	0.42
30	Rivers	14	0.59
31	Sokoto	10	0.42
32	Taraba	46	1.94
33	Yobe	4	0.17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: <https://punchng.com/2371-people-abducted-in-nigeria>

From Table 2 above, Niger State has the highest number of kidnapping incidence (27.12%), in the period under review. Zamfara state was the second in terms of kidnapping rate (21.89%). Kaduna State has the (15.89%), of the entire kidnapping cases. The three states with extremely high number of kidnapping are in the Northern Nigeria. Terrorism is high in the North, and there is possibility of terrorists using kidnapping for ransom as mean of funding terrorism in the North. This worsens

poverty level in the north, most of the states felt under category of educationally disadvantaged states.

**Table 3: Kidnapping in the First Half of 2021, (Agbakwuru, and Ibrahim, 2021)**

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4.	Anambra	14	0.59
5	Bauchi	3	0.13
6	Bayelsa	7	0.30
7	Benue	6	0.25
8	Borno	1	0.04
9	Cross River	4	0.17
10	Delta	51	2.15
11	Ebonyi	5	0.21
12	Edo	18	0.76
13	Ekiti	14	0.59
14	Enugu	15	0.63
15	Gombe	1	0.04
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20	Kebbi	81	3.42
21	Kogi	31	1.31
22	Kwara	10	0.42
23	Lagos	6	0.25
24	Nasarawa	44	1.86
25	Ogun	26	1.10
26	Ondo	17	0.72
27	Osun	23	0.97
28	Oyo	61	2.57
29	Plateau	10	0.42
30	Rivers	14	0.59
31	Sokoto	10	0.42
32	Taraba	46	1.94
33	Yobe	4	0.17
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2,371</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source:<https://punchng.com/2371-people-abducted-in-nigeria-in-first-half-of-2021>

From Table 4 above, Niger State has the highest number of kidnapping incidence (27.12%), in the period under review. Zamfara state was the second in terms of kidnapping rate (21.89%). Kaduna State has the (15.89%), of the entire kidnapping cases. The three states with extremely high number of kidnapping are in the Northern Nigeria. Terrorism is high in the North, and there is possibility of terrorists using kidnapping for ransom as mean of funding terrorism in the North. This worsens poverty level in the north, most of the states felt under category of educationally disadvantaged states.

**Table 5: Ten Solutions to Kidnapping through Routine Activity Theory’s` Crime Prevention Techniques**

S/N	Technique	Security Tips	Expectations
1	Reduced Social Strains	Employment opportunities Youth capacity development Responsible and accountable leadership Strong locks	Creates opportunities for poverty alleviation Engaging youths positively Enhancement of entrepreneurship Preventing kidnappers’ access
2.	Target Protection	Ant-robbery Screen Tamper-Proof Packaging	Kidnappers who intends to rob victims are frustrated Potential kidnappers are intercepted
3	Access Control Devices	Phoning entry Electronic card Biometric Access	This prevents unauthorized kidnappers It renders kidnappers helpless. The kidnappers are frustrated
4	Deflect Kidnappers Control Illicit Access to small and Light Weapons	Street Gates Disperse Pub Limit the prevalence	This will facilitate Arrest of kidnappers This reduces the success of kidnapping
5.	Improved Guardianship	Border Control Don’t go out lonely Well charged cell Phones Avoid signs of occupancy Avoid Flamboyance	It reduces the influx of illegal guns used by kidnappers Especially at night, so that other members of the group could contact law enforcement if kidnappers struck This will enhance contact with family members or emergency service providers This confuses kidnappers Unnecessary display of wealth gives kidnappers impression
7.	Hide Targets	Work Identity Public expression of financial worth	This could be used for ransom negotiation Kidnappers target people with formidable financial value.
8.	Non-Artificial Surveillance Systems	Enhanced street lighting Defensible Space design Whistle-blowing mechanism	This exposes kidnappers It makes it difficult for kidnappers to act. It serves as intelligence gathering on kidnappers
9	Consolidates the formal surveillance	Red-light cameras control Anti-burglar alarms Gallant security protection	Gives information about presence of kidnappers Raise alarms on kidnappers Scares kidnappers away and call for reinforcement to challenge kidnappers
10.	Benefit Denial	Preventing payment of ransom If ransom is paid, put in machinery for tracking Arrest and prosecute	This discourages kidnappers If at all ransom is paid, it should be tracked through effective technology This discourages potential kidnappers

Source: <https://soztheo.de/theories-of-crime/rational-choice/routine-activity-theory->

From Table 5 above, the various situational strategies to ameliorate or control kidnaping were depicted. The three variables as propounded by Marcus Felson and Cohen. In this first instance, motivated offenders are products of prolonged social strains and frustration. Social strains may result from lack of social security like employment, youth capacity building and responsible leadership. These could be addressed by creating employment opportunities, engaging youths

productively and promoting entrepreneurship.<sup>41</sup> From the Table 3, when conditions of motivated offenders have been created through poor social security system. The targets have to be protected from kidnapers. If the targets are not properly protected, there is possibility of falling victims of kidnapers. Access control, deflection of kidnapers, control of illegal access, improvement in guardianship, artificial intelligence are viable means of protection. All these measures prevent kidnapers from succeeding in their operations.

### Summary

The paper applied the thrust of routine activity theory to explain the incident of kidnaping; Motivated offenders are the frustrated youths who resorted to kidnaping as means of survival. They could be adults who resort to kidnaping as brisk business of making money. Kidnaping is serious crime that undermines the corporate existence of Nigeria. Most governors are overwhelmed by the spate of kidnaping in their jurisdiction. The kidnaping of 121 students of the Bethel Baptist Secondary School is the most recent. And this creates serious crisis in the stat. This is in tandem with the study conducted by Aliyu, Sunday and Adah (2020), also supported by Akanji (2015).

From Figure 3, the kidnapped Chibok Secondary School Girls were protesting the prolonged abduction of 276 girls by Boko Haram Extremists. As established by Bolaji (2018), kidnaping has caused serious havoc in social and economic fabric of society. Some have incurred monumental debt that is making life miserable for them. The psychological and social effects of kidnaping are unimaginable. The stigmatization and other social discrimination are the side effects of kidnaping in Nigeria.<sup>42</sup> From Table 1, the total number of people that were kidnap in the first half of 2012 were 2,371. This reveals the astronomical proportion of kidnaping in Nigeria as a serious threat to national security. It affirms the study carried out by Yakubu and Bello (2020).<sup>43</sup>

### CONCLUSION

This paper dwells on Routine Activity Theory and waves of kidnaping in Nigeria. It explores the three principles of routine activity theory. These are motivated offenders, suitable targets and availability or non-availability of guardianship. To buttress on this, different descriptive analysis was used in explaining the phenomenon. Based on findings, kidnaping in Nigeria has reached unimaginable proportion. The Northern states are worst hit by kidnaping; however, the immediate and far-reaching effects of kidnaping affects all the states of the federation. For peace to reign in the Nigerian system, kidnaping must be brought to end through effective social security system. This paper will be useful to individuals, security agencies, government at various levels. Non-governmental body and researchers in the field of social sciences will benefit from this study.

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<sup>41</sup> R.V.Clarke, & Eck, J. E. *Crime analysis for problem solvers: In 60 small steps*. Washington DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing.2005

<sup>42</sup> Op.Cit., Jiang, B, Mac, C.N. S, Zhung, H. Larsen, Webster

<sup>43</sup> J.U. Yakubu, & Bello, M.M. Kidnaping and Hostage Taking; an Emerging Issue in Security in Katsina State. *Journal of Advancement in Social Science and Humanities*.6 (30), 2020, 32—53

## Recommendations

- i. Government and school owners should be encouraged to use and deploy highly configured geographical information system (GIS) and remote sensing equipment such as Closed-Circuit Television Camera (CCTV). These will discourage kidnapping in schools. It will also aid arrest and investigation of criminals. Since education is essential to both individuals and society. Governments through their various security agencies should provide adequate security protection in and around school environments.
- ii. There should be a proactive and heavy security presence in all states. The government should increase the employment of security personnel in all the security agencies in Nigeria. This will help in reducing prevalence of kidnapping.
- iii. There should be strong communication flow and sharing system among the various stakeholders in Nigeria.
- iv. The citizens should be encouraged to report suspected cases on time to the rapid response units of the police.
- v. The government at all levels (local, state and Federal) should encourage social security schemes, from the half of 2021 and beyond to reduce the prevalence of kidnapping. The existing ones such as N-power, Agric-YES, and Technical Training Scheme should be reform for better performance.

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