
NIGERIAN POLICE AND COMPETENCE CHALLENGE IN TACKLING INSECURITY IN THE COUNTRY

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ABSTRACT: *In Nigeria, tackling growing insecurity is a critical and urgent task. Without adequate security, the citizens cannot optimize their potential. This research examined the Nigerian Police and the competence challenge in tackling insecurity in the country. Attribution theory served as the theoretical background. It explained the thinking and behaviour of Nigerian police's corruption, impunity, poor capacity building, and poor remuneration. These hamper professional competence, as well as sacrifice to combat insecurity. It was recommended that training and education should be integrated more into policing. Also, drastic reformation of the Nigerian Police in the area of establishment of State Police will help a lot in combating insecurity in Nigeria.*

KEYWORDS: Police, Nigeria, Competence, Insecurity Challenges

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is currently battling generalized insecurity. With hardly any of its six political zones spared from one form of insecurity or the other. The dispersed and growing insecurity in Nigeria, despite the best efforts of the members of the country's security forces and increased budgetary provisions, will clearly play very high in the minds of politicians and voters as Nigeria approaches the landmark 2023 elections. Also at issue are a host of election-related concerns: whether elections will hold in some of the flashpoints; whether there will be adequate security in place to ensure the conduct of free, fair and credible polls; and how the outcome of the elections could impact post-election stability in the country.

For the current and future administrations in Nigeria, tackling growing insecurity is, thus a critical and urgent task. It is of utmost existential significance to the citizens and the state itself. Without adequate security, the citizens cannot optimise their potentials. And with expanding insecurity, both the capacity and the legitimacy of the state get eroded. Securing life and property still remains the primary responsibility of the state and the state enjoying the monopoly of violence remains the only safeguard against descent to anarchy. So, more

than at any of the previous six general elections in the Fourth Republic, the state of security will be a major issue in the 2023 elections precisely because almost all parts of the country have been drawn into the frontlines. The theatre of insecurity is no longer restrict to the North East, where admittedly some progress has been made against Boko Haram and its splinter groups.

For example, the cumulative effect of the generalized insecurity is that the fear among Nigerians is palpable as nowhere seems immune. This is especially so in rural areas which bear a heavier brunt, given the somewhat regular rate those areas are besieged. The debilitating security challenges are already also taking a toll on economic activities, particularly with regard to commerce and agriculture. The adverse effect is also felt in the education sector in many parts of the country. This is in addition to the humanitarian crisis occasioned by mass displacements in states burdened by security challenges.

In the North-West and North-Central, the sacking of hundreds of farming communities will further exacerbate the looming spectre of hunger and starvation in a country with the second largest burden of malnourished children in the world. The rapid spread of ISWAP cells, if untamed, could give the Islamic State an opportunity to turn

Nigeria into the new Syria. The North Central, South West, and South South are equally burdened by growing insecurity in different forms. The electioneering and transition period provides a most auspicious moment to contend with both the security situation and the ways out. Expectedly, there would be clashes of prescriptions on how to tackle this growing menace to all Nigerians. The starting point for this paper is the need for a clear understanding of the nature and the drivers of insecurity in Nigeria and, consequently, the imperative of grounding solutions in such a nuanced understanding.

Public service agencies such as the police must secure the support of the public if they are to provide efficient and effective services. Public support and perceptions of the police play an important role in dictating their efficacy as a public institution. The notion that there is a nexus between public perceptions of the police and their ability to achieve goals and objectives is reflected in the ideal of policing by consent (Carter, 2012). Simply stated, this notion holds that the police can only achieve their goals and objectives when they have the public's support and cooperation but the competence challenge have reduced the trust and confidence of people in the police which has deteriorated the support and cooperation with the police. With echoes of the Black Lives Matter movement in the United States, massive demonstrations against police brutality have recently rocked Nigeria (Busari, 2020; Obaji, 2020). The protests in Nigeria and elsewhere have erupted and continued against a background of widespread public perceptions and experiences of the police as corrupt, untrustworthy, and unhelpful through their activities like unlawful arrests, illegal executions, bribery and intimidation. These negative views are particularly strong in Nigeria, but importantly, they are common in other African countries as well.

The civil rights movement and recent protests highlighted the strained relationships that exist between the police and the public in many communities of Nigeria. In 2017 to date, the State Police Departments in the Southeast state was the target of protests in the aftermath of the torturing and killing of members of the indigenous people of Biafra (IPOB) from the south east region of the

nation in their quest for autonomy and independence.

Attribution theory of Behavior (Heider, 1958)

Attribution theory is concerned with how individuals perceive and interpret events and how this relates to their thinking and behavior. When people try to make attributions about another's behavior, their information focuses on the individual. Their perception of that individual is lacking most of the external factors which might affect the individual. The gaps tend to be skipped over and the attribution is made based on the perception information most salient. The most salient perceptual information dominates a person's perception of the situation.

For individuals making behavioral attributions about themselves or significant others, the situation and external environment are entirely important, but their own body and behavior are less so. This leads to the tendency to make an external attribution in regard to their behavior. Humans are motivated to assign causes to their actions and behaviors. In social psychology, attribution is the process by which individuals explain the causes of behavior and events or point towards a particular factor or behavior as a result of a particular perception or predisposed attitude. Models to explain this process are called attribution theory. Psychological research into attribution began with the work of Heider in the early 20th century, and the theory was further advanced by Kelley and Weiner.

Gestalt psychologist Heider is often described as the early-20th-century father of attribution theory. In his 1920s dissertation, Heider addressed the problem of phenomenology: reasons perceivers attribute the properties such as color to perceived objects, when those properties are mental constructs, Heider's answer that perceivers attribute that which they directly sense – vibrations in the air for instance – to an object they construe as causing those to sense data. Perceivers faced with sensory data thus see the perceptual object as out there, because they attribute the sensory data to their underlying causes in the world. Heider extended this idea to attributions about people's motives, intentions and sentiments which are the

core processes that manifest themselves in overt behavior.

External attribution, also called situational attribution, refers to interpreting someone's behavior as being caused by the situation that the individual is in. For example, if one's car tire is punctured, it may be attributed to a hole in the road; by making attributions to the poor condition of the highway, one can make sense of the event without any discomfort that it may in reality have been the result of their own bad driving (Heider, 1958).

Internal attribution, or dispositional attribution, refers to the process of assigning the cause of behavior to some internal characteristic, like ability and motivation, rather than to outside forces. This concept has overlap with the Locus of control, in which individuals feel they are personally responsible for everything that happens to them. Example; A child attributes the weather to their feelings; the child is feeling sad, because it is raining outside (Heider, 1958).

From the book *The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations* (1958), Heider tried to explore the nature of interpersonal relationship, and espoused the concept of what he called common sense or naïve psychology. In his theory, he believed that people observe, analyze, and explain behaviors with explanations. Although people have different kinds of explanations for the events of human behaviors, Heider found it is very useful to group explanation into two categories; Internal (personal) and external (situational) attributions. When an internal attribution is made, the cause of the given behavior is assigned to the individual's characteristics such as ability, personality, mood, efforts, attitudes or disposition. When an external attribution is made, the cause of the given behavior is assigned to the situation in which the behavior was seen such as the task, other people, or luck (that the individual producing the behavior did so because of the surrounding environment or the social situation). These two types lead to very different perceptions of the individual engaging in a behavior or perceiving a behavior.

People tend to attribute other people's behaviors to their dispositional factors while attributing their own actions to situational factors.

In the same situation, people's attribution can differ depending on their role as actor or observer. For example, when a person is arrested or killed because of his presence in a crime scene without knowing anything about the crime, they find situational factors to justify the negative event such as saying that the Police didn't arrive the crime scene on time to apprehend the main culprits of the crime but arriving an hour late to arrest and kill innocent ones seen around the crime scene. However, if another person is arrested for his presence in a crime scene without knowing anything about the crime, the person will attribute it to internal factors such as carelessness and a result of keeping late night. This is to say that when we observe other people, we tend to focus on the person, whereas when we are actors, our attention is focused towards situational factors (Heider, 1958).

Dispositional attributions

Dispositional attribution is a tendency to attribute people's behaviors to their dispositions; that is, to their personality, character, and ability. For example, when a normally pleasant roadside policeman is being rude to the road users, the road users or drivers may assume he/she has a bad character. The driver, just by looking at the attitude that the policeman is giving him/her, instantly decides that the policeman is a bad person. The driver oversimplifies the situation by not taking into account all the unfortunate events that might have happened to the policeman which made him/her become rude at that moment. Therefore, the driver made dispositional attribution by attributing the policeman's behavior directly to his/her personality rather than considering situational factors that might have caused the whole rudeness (Heider, 1958).

Self-serving bias is attributing dispositional and internal factors for success, while external and uncontrollable factors are used to explain the reason for failure. For example, if a person gets away from the police with an expired paper, it is because of his/her ability to out run them through over speeding at their check points whereas if he/she does not get free, it is because he or she did not bribe the police (external, uncontrollable factor). Originally, people assumed that self-serving bias is strongly related to the fact that people want to protect their

self-esteem. However, an alternative information processing explanation is that when the outcomes match people's expectations, they make attributions to internal factors (Heider, 1958). For example, if you disobey a police order to pack for paper check you believe it was because of your perception of police image on bribery and intimidation; when the outcome does not match their expectations, they make external attributions or excuses.

People tends to perceive the police negatively as a result of the illegal activities they perpetuate in the country and the traumatic experience of intimidation, unlawful arrest and illegal executions/killings they or their family members have received or have been victims of in the past in the hands of these uniform men. This in one way or the other and according to literatures might have affected the people's perception about the police negatively, which will in turn spring up poor public co-operation and support with the police.

Based on this theory, Personal interactions tend to have the strongest impact on perceptions. People form opinions of the police based on their own interactions with them or the experiences they hear from trusted friends and family. People tend to focus on how police treat them the process and interactions rather than the final outcome of those interactions. For example, research shows that people report positive impressions of an officer who treated them fairly and respectfully even if the officer gave them a huge bill (Tyler & Tom, 2015). It has also been observed that an officer's demeanor and actions are crucial to perceptions of police legitimacy based on this theory of attribution. If officers communicate well, listen and treat citizens with respect, citizens will respond in kind.

People who perceive that they received procedural justice are also likely to perceive the police as legitimate and trustworthy and are likely to comply in the future. Procedural justice is the notion that a process is fair and that people have the opportunity to be heard, are treated politely and respectfully, and are judged by a neutral system free of bias. Media accounts of police misconduct also influence perceptions of the police, but less so than personal interactions. Frequent exposure to media reports of police

abuse or corruption is a strong predictor of perceptions of misconduct and supports the belief that it is common.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NIGERIA POLICE

From pre-colonial experience, traditional African policing methods were rooted in the community and closely interlinked with social and religious structures. However, as the British sought colonial expansion across the territories known today as Nigeria, they established local, decentralized police forces. The first such force was created to police the Lagos colony in 1861. Subsequent constabularies were formed in what became the northern and southern protectorate. The composition of these police forces varied depending on location. For example, in the Lagos colony a deliberate strategy utilized officers from the linguistically and culturally distinct Hausa ethnic group from the north of the country. This practice appeared to alienate the police from the local community they were employed to control. By contrast in the northern Nigeria protectorate a system of indirect rule depended on the Hausa chiefs and emirs, and thus the emir's existing police system was strengthened.

In 1930, the northern and southern police forces emerged into the first national police force; called the Nigeria Police Force. This was headed by an Inspector General of Police (IGP). The following years saw further changes in the organization of the force, such as the introduction of regional commands to reflect the federalism of Nigeria. Responsibility for maintaining law and order was now shared by federal and regional governments. When Nigeria became an independent country in 1960 from the British, the same basic structures was retained. Thus, the Independence Constitution (1960) and the Republican Constitution (1963) provided for local police force and the Nigeria Police Force.

The military seized power on 15th January 1966 and dissolved the local police forces, as a result of negative roles attributed to the forces during the First Republic (1960-1966). By this time, public perceptions of the police were firmly grounded in their experience of the use of the police force to extend colonial domination. Today, Nigeria is currently having a centralized police force, as entrenched in the

1999 constitution. Section 214 (1) of the 1999 constitution stipulates that: There shall be a Police Force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section no other police force shall be established for the federation or any part thereof.

Nigeria Police Force in Perspective

The Nigeria Police is the principal law enforcement and the lead security agency in Nigeria with a staff strength of about 371,800 (Micah & John, 2017). There are currently plans to increase the force to 650,000, adding 280,000 new recruits to the existing 370,000. The NPF is a very large organization consisting of 36 State commands grouped into 12 zones and 7 administrative organs. The agency is currently headed by IGP Adamu Muhammed. In 2020, it underwent major overhauls. The Nigerian Police (NP) is designated by the 1999 constitution as the national police of Nigeria with exclusive jurisdiction throughout the country (Odeyemi, Temitayo & Obiyan, 2017). Although generally considered an attractive career, the NPF experienced endemic problems with recruiting, training, inefficiency, and indiscipline, and it lacked expertise in specialized fields. Corruption and dishonesty were widespread, engendering a low level of public confidence, failure to report crimes, and tendencies to resort to self-help. Police were more adept at paramilitary operations and the exercise of force than at community service functions or crime prevention, detection, and investigation (Odeyemi, Temitayo & Obiyan, 2018)

During the Regime of former head of state Olusegun Obasanjo, an attempt was made to expand the NPF by reducing the recruitment age from nineteen to seventeen and by enrolling demobilized soldiers, but it failed. In mid-1980 the then federal police minister acknowledged that the police had recovered only 14 percent of the US\$900 million worth of property reported stolen in the preceding six months, and that only 20 percent of the 103,000 persons arrested had been found guilty, a performance record about the same as that reported in the 1960s. The use of excessive violence in quelling student disorders led the AFRC in June 1986 to direct the police to

use only rubber bullets in containing student riots (Odeyemi, Temitayo & Obiyan, 2018).

Reports of police collusion with criminals were common, as were official appeals to police officers to change their attitude toward the public, to be fair and honest, and to avoid corrupt practices. In an effort to reduce bribery and to make identification of offenders easier, police officers on beats and at checkpoints were not allowed to carry more than N5 on their person. In September 2005, Nigeria withdrew 120 police officers serving in the UN Congo mission because of accusations that they had engaged in sexual abuses (Micah & John, 2017).

The NPF is alleged to follow a policy of "Fire for Fire" in which many captured suspects die in police custody or are shot while attempting to escape. Decades of police and official corruption and continued failure to train police officers properly has led to a situation where Extrajudicial Justice is an accepted form of dealing with people the police believe to be criminals. The most recent victim of which is Yusuf Mohamed, the leader of the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria, was alive when captured by the army. Even before the violence surrounding the Boko Haram uprising in northern Nigeria, there were questions over the conduct of the security forces.

The government is currently attempting to reform the police. They have produced a White Paper with 79 recommendations for improving the police force, which is due to be considered by the National Assembly and turned into a Police Reform Bill (Micah & John, 2017). Key reforms such as: Police officers are paid as little as \$40 (£26) a month, this should be raised to \$100 for police constables, Deal with the estimated 10,000 officers with criminal records hired between 2011 and 2014, Establish a reliable system for the public to complain about the police, better educated Recruits should attain a certain level of qualification before being considered, job applications should be transparently managed, policemen should not have to buy their own, the police are in dire need of an up-to-date communication network, and the police should be given better investigating tools and the training to use them. The Nigerian Police was ranked as the institution viewed as the most corrupt in Nigeria,

according to a survey done at Ahmadu Bello University (Micah & John, 2017).

The Nigeria Police is a paramilitary federal institution whose operation is under the control of the President of the country. The Nigeria Police is, by law, vested with the responsibility of detecting, investigating and solving crime so as to ensure peace and stability in the nation. Within the criminal justice system, the police is referred to as the gatekeeper (Alemika, 2014) since they set in motion a criminal case. Within the category of the Nigeria Police Force are other similar organizations like Nigeria Customs Service, Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and Immigration Services, to mention a few (Alemika, 2014).

From the responsibilities vested in the police as recorded in the Nigeria constitution, criminal cases are initiated by the police who investigate, summons, makes arrest, detain and sets in motion the case. However, when the police are besieged by behaviors that are antithetical to the purpose for which they were established, then the society is set for anomie. According to Wambua (2015), in a survey by Afrobarometer, a pan-African, non-partisan research network that reviews public opinions on issues of governance, democracy and other developmental issues that span more than 30 African countries, it was found that across 34 countries, about half (53%) of citizens would seek out the police first for assistance in a crime situation. Also, of the 34 countries, the police rank lowest of the trusted public institutions in Nigeria. The report concluded that the police institution is the most corrupt in all the African nations surveyed and issues related to police performance and effectiveness prevented people from reporting crimes to the police.

Human Rights Watch (2005) reported that about 900 police officers were dismissed in the year 2004 from the Nigeria Police Force on the ground of extortion. In another report, 51% of Nigerians expressed dissatisfaction with the police, a figure higher than the Africa average of 45%. While of all security institutions in the nation, the Nigeria Police has the least trust of the citizens with 59% indicating that they have no trust in the police (Afrobarometer, 2005).

Another study conducted in 2013 by CLEEN foundation reported that the Nigeria police's incompetence to curtail corruption, brutality and unruliness undermines public opinion of them.

Equally there are incessant reports of police officers violating their code of conduct and the fundamental human rights of citizens. Society is unsafe as crime prevails, fundamental human rights violated, and physical and psychological health compromised. This constitutes a contradiction of the purpose of this institution and a violation of their social role. Rather than abate or eliminate crime and maintain peace and order, it exacerbates social vices. As rightly captured by Kumssa (2015), police dishonesty weakens their perceived value and effectiveness in the eye of the citizens.

POLICE PUBLIC IMAGE AND COMPETENCE CHALLENGE

In Nigeria today, the armed force department of police which is charged with the responsibility of protecting lives and properties of the citizens has had a long-time documented history of a complicated relationship with the communities they serve. Some research has shown that citizens' perceptions of law enforcement continue to influence willingness to cooperate or report crimes (Okonkwo, 2007), particularly for victims who belong to racial/ethnic minority groups. Hundreds of people are unlawfully killed by the police in Nigeria every year. They do perpetrate this unlawful act for various reasons. Primarily, they engage in this criminal act as a result of the high level of corruption which has permeated the Nigerian Police Force and government at large as was seen in the just concluded elections.

It is no longer news in Nigeria as personnel of the Police Force stand on highways to extort money and collect bribes from commercial drivers and crime perpetrators. Large numbers of persons of different ages have been unlawfully arrested, illegally killed and intimidated by personnel of the Nigerian Police Force because they declined giving them bribe or co-operating with them negatively. Others are killed because the police use excessive force and aggression during arrest or are killed by police officers aggressively in extrajudicial executions. Once in custody and away from the public eye,

some people are tortured to death in police stations; others disappear in custody. While some literatures have cited that citizens generally have positive perceptions of police (Benedict et al., 2012; Chermak et al., 2011), there is a lot of literature that has reported that the public perception of police tends to be generally negative and that many people perceive police to be unfair, sometimes abusive and neglects their duties in safeguarding lives and properties (Callanan & Rosenberger, 2011; Fratello, et al 2013; MacAlister, 2011, Okonkwo, 2020).

According to Alemika (2012) the Nigeria Police Force falls short of optimum performance. Consequently, in the course of performing its statutory functions to the larger community, the Nigeria police have often been indicted in several ways. This is manifest in the widespread inefficiency, corruption, unfairness in dealing with suspects, occasional over-use of legitimate force, bad temper, bullying and other abuses of citizen's rights with impunity. Till date, despite the constitutional powers granted the police to maintain public tranquility, safety and general security in Nigeria, the quality of crime prevention and control is nothing to write home about. Police officers are accused of brutality, abuse of human rights, aiding and abetting of criminal activities and engaging in bribery and corruption

Dalhatu (2013) Opined that the police institution in Nigeria still have a long way to go in meeting its expectations especially in the areas of crime prevention and detection. The police are often not polite to victims of crime, because they are treated as mere sources of crime evidence and not as human beings. Most violent conflicts had occurred due to the ineptitude and inefficiency in the performance of police statutory duties.

Ogunwale (2014) Stressed that the capacity of Nigeria police in monitoring and managing the social space in the nation are disappointingly suboptimal and will continue to remain unless a new relationship of honest and genuine interdependence is built between the government and the governed and between the police as an institution of government and civil society as those from whom government derives its legitimacy. Thus, the thrust of the study is that, despite repositioning of the Nigeria Police Force

to ensure safety and security of the people and individual property, their level of efficiency seems to be at a pitiful level. The need therefore arises to explore the public perception of the police and crime – prevention in Nigeria.

NIGERIAN POLICE COMPETENCE INHIBITORS IN TACKLING INSECURITY

Some factors contribute as inhibitors in tackling insecurity in Nigeria. Some of these factors are embedded in institutional, social and personality systems. These factors are:

Corruption: The endemic corruption in the law enforcement system seriously undermines the framework for the respect, protection and fulfillment of human rights and has led to human rights violations. To further describe how this corruption syndrome has eroded the Nigeria Police Force, on January 18, 2005, then inspector-General of Police (IGP) TafaBalogun resigned on suspicion that he diverted large sums of public funds for his personal use (Ogunwale, 2014). The Federal High Court subsequently convicted him on November 23, 2005, after he pleaded guilty to eight counts money laundering, corruption, theft of public resources, and unlawful enrichment.

In all, the charges involved assets totaling US \$ 150 million, and included money hidden in bank accounts, shares in blue chip companies, and up to fourteen high-end properties. This case goes to show that if corruption continues to gain its root in the police Force, summary executions will keep increasing on a daily basis. On a related note, the Nigerian police have killed so many innocent civilians for refusing to give them ridiculous stipends. The 2008 report of second Presidential Committee on Police Reform acknowledges quite candidly that this is the image of the Nigerian Police Indeed the police is publicly perceived as one of the most corrupt government institutions, with its personnel constantly accused of bribery and extortion in the course of performing their functions.

These accusations are rampant amongst the populace, especially that relating to the extortion from members of the public. In addition, the police have also been accused of erecting illegal road blocks in order to extort

money from the citizenry (Ogunwale, 2014). This has resulted in the loss of public confidence in the integrity of police personnel. This wide spread corruption cuts-across all the States of Nigeria and the government have still not found solution to this nagging problem because they are equally guilty of same (Ogunwale, 2014).

Impunity: Moreover, impunity has been discovered as one of the major reasons for police poor competence in Nigeria. Police officers have continued to kill unlawfully because they are not being held accountable for this crime. The Nigeria Police Service Commission, the Inspector-General of Police and the President of Nigerian are all to be blamed for the summary killings by personnel of the Nigerian Police Force and this is because they allow perpetrators go free without being punished. In fact, most of these perpetrators are covered by the Nigerian Police Force as soon as they perpetrate this crime. To keep the whole matter secret, perpetrators are transferred by superiors to another division entirely which is outside the State where the crime is carried out in order to make investigation and prosecution difficult (Ogunwale, 2014).

Nigerian Police exhibit criminal impunity because they are not prosecuted for their crimes. Under international law, governments are obliged to bring to justice people who have been identified as having participated in extrajudicial executions and other unlawful killings. This applies not just to those who commit arbitrary killings, but also to those superior officers who knew or should have known that their subordinates are resorting or have resorted to the unlawful use of force and firearms, and they did not take measures in their power to prevent, suppress or report such use. More profoundly, the UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions states: Superiors, officers or other public officials may be held responsible for acts committed by officials under their authority if they had a reasonable opportunity to prevent such acts (Ogunwale, 2014).

The Nigerian government has repeatedly claimed that they do not condone extra-judicial killing. However, authorities are not doing enough to stop extrajudicial executions and bring

suspected perpetrators to justice. In 2007, the Nigerian Human Rights Commission noted that cases of extrajudicial, summary and arbitrary executions are hardly documented, investigated and prosecuted by the police. The police authorities carry out investigation only rarely, when the victim's family, the media, the court or NGOs put pressure on the Nigerian Police Force or other government agencies. Investigations that should take place suffer from delays and partiality and do not comply with international standards.

When a police officer is prosecuted, he or she is often released on bail and sometimes even escapes custody. The case of the officers who summarily executed six youths in Apo village, Abuja, Nigeria, in 2005 illustrates the difficulties with ensuring accountability for police abuses (Alemika, 2012). The Justice Goodluck Commission recommended the prosecution of all the officers involved in the killings. In its Universal Periodic Review report to the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2009, Nigeria's Federal government claimed that the officers implicated had been tried and sentenced to death whereas no such thing had happened. It is not surprising therefore, that the public regards the Nigerian Police Force as lacking the credibility and efficacy to investigate crimes committed by police officers (Alemika, 2012).

Unqualified and Undertrained Personnel: Furthermore, another propelling factor of this competence challenge in tackling insecurity by police officers is that of unqualified and undertrained personnel. Admittedly, most of those enrolled into the Nigeria Police Force are largely primary and secondary school certificate holders who do not have the required qualification. One can hardly count personnel of the Nigerian Police Force who possess a university degree. In fact, most of these personnel cannot speak English language. They communicate with innocent civilians in their local dialect and pidgin English. As a result of their low self-esteem, they often feel intimidated and at the slightest provocation they open fire on their victim.

Imagine what the Force will turn to with this group of unqualified and undertrained police officers. Unlike other developed nations of the

world where they have standard qualifications without which no aspiring applicant can gain entrance into the police Force. The contrary has always been the case in Nigeria. People are recruited into the Force in Nigeria based on connection and not proper qualification. This is why the Force cannot compete with its peers in other part of the world because of the kind of personnel admitted (Alemika, 2012).

Poor Capacity Building: Poor capacity building in the Force has led to grave violation of the citizens human rights as these police personnel do not have basic exposure and knowledge on human rights related issues. They treat their fellow human beings as animals because they do not have any basic foresight as to why they are taking up the job of a police officer. Every year the force keeps recruiting personnel without providing them with the required skills to carry out their task of ensuring the citizens protection.

For instance, the Presidential Committee reported in 2006 as follows: This sudden explosion, as a result of mass recruitment exercise, turned the colleges more into concentration camps than training institutions (Alemika, 2012). Two years later, the Presidential Committee noted the effects of the recruitment wave on the police: The nation was therefore saddled with a very large number of unqualified, under-trained and ill-equipped officers and men many of whose suitability to wear the respected uniform of the Force is in doubt. The police are today stuck with this undesirable workforce. The Nigerian Police Force's training facilities are overstretched and under-resourced. There is no gain saying the fact that poor recruiting criteria and poor capacity training has adversely impacted on the Force (Alemika, 2012).

Poor remuneration: Poor remuneration has also been considered as one of the push factors. Personnel of the Nigerian Police Force are seen on the highway collecting inducements and extorting money from innocent civilians because they are poorly remunerated. They engage in this gross misconduct because they see it as a means of supplementing their meager salary. In situation where commercial drivers and civilians do not

corporate with them by giving them bribes, they get angry and open fire on the victim.

Of course, there is so much risk attached to the task of these police officers which is the more reason why their remuneration should be increased so that they can live a comfortable life with their families and also stop to engage in all sort of human rights infringements. Virtually all victims of summary executions by the Nigerian Police Force got killed because they declined giving the Nigerian police personnel bribe. Inefficiency and corruption in the Nigerian Police Force are usually linked to poor salaries and difficult working conditions. The low pay has undermined the social status, morale and self-esteem of police personnel (Alemika, 2012).

The admittance of short-tempered staff into the force has placed extrajudicial killings on the climax. The Nigerian Police Force does not allow their personnel go through psychological training before recruiting them. Unlike advanced countries of the world where they employ expert psychologist to study the temperament of those about to be recruited into the Force. The contrary is the case in Nigeria. In a handful of cases, police officers have shot their victims in situations where there was little altercation which on a normal day could have been resolved amicably. This is because the police officers could not control their temper.

This problem of admitting just anybody into the force without adequate psychological examination has continued to pose a lot of danger to the general public. Most citizens cannot argue with police officers even when they are rights because of the fear of being killed. Nigerian citizens are quite aware that so many police personnel are short-tempered, and ready to pull their triggers at any slight argument. This shortcoming encourages a tradition of police brutality and an intolerably high propensity for police violence (Alemika, 2012).

Notably, the Nigerian police personnel have a very poor image. The public distrust them because of their cruel nature and notorious act of improbity. Being fully aware that they do not have any reputation to protect, they keep perpetrating arbitrary executions. The Nigerian police lack proper policing skills unlike their peers in other parts of the world. They are also

very unfriendly to the public to which they owe a duty of care. The Presidential Committee on Police Reform in 2006 confirmed that in Nigeria, the relationship between the Police and the public is largely characterized by mutual mistrust and hostility. The general causes of the negative opinion on police by the public include the repressive nature of enforcement under authoritarian colonial and post-colonial governments; general inefficiency of the police due to inadequate facilities; corruption; poor remuneration and conditions of service; insensitivity and incivility towards the public by the police (Ogunwale, 2014).

Public Perception of Nigerian Police: People form opinions of the police based on their own interactions with them or the experiences they hear from trusted friends and family. People tend to focus on how police treat them the process and interactions rather than the final outcome of those interactions. For example, research shows that people report positive impressions of an officer who treated them fairly and respectfully even if the officer gave them a huge bill (Tyler & Tom, 2015). It has also been observed that an officer's demeanor and actions are crucial to perceptions of police legitimacy based on this theory of attribution.

If officers communicate well, listen and treat citizens with respect, citizens will respond in kind. People who perceive that they received procedural justice are also likely to perceive the police as legitimate and trustworthy and are likely to comply in the future. Procedural justice is the notion that a process is fair and that people have the opportunity to be heard, are treated politely and respectfully, and are judged by a neutral system free of bias.

Media accounts of police misconduct also influence perceptions of the police, but less so than personal interactions. Frequent exposure to media reports of police abuse or corruption is a strong predictor of perceptions of misconduct and supports the belief that it is common (Okonkwo & Ezeonuegbu, 2022).

CHALLENGES INHIBITING COMPETENT POLICING

Institutional Challenges: The Police Service Commission (PSC), the civilian oversight body

of the police, has no independent capacity to investigate or 'police' the police force. Complaints against Nigerian police officers made to the PSC end up being investigated by the police itself, who then report to the PSC. This lack of an independent complaints system is unsatisfactory. It is part of why internal discipline is weak and a corporate culture of excellence in service delivery does not exist in the force. For this reason, there is no framework for rating police commands or measuring their effectiveness.

Structural Challenges: The way the police are organized is the reason community policing is ineffective. State Commissioners of Police take instructions from the Inspector General of Police (IGP), who receives instructions from the president, rather than from State Governors. The over-centralized structure of the police does not help it to connect with communities as it should. The current command structure of the police was created by the military governments prior to 1999 and has not changed despite over two decades of democratic governments.

Legal/Establishment Challenges: The legal framework of the NPF needs to be changed to provide security of tenure for IGPs. S215(3) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) states that: "The President or such other Minister of the Government of the Federation as he may authorize in that behalf may give to the Inspector-General of Police such lawful directions with respect to the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order as he may consider necessary, and the Inspector-General of Police shall comply with those directions or cause them to be complied with."

So, what can the IGP do if the President gives him an order that is unlawful? Absolutely nothing. In fact, the constitution in S215(5) states: "The question whether any, and if so what, directions have been given under this section shall not be inquired into in any court." This means the IGP cannot seek judicial review of an unlawful order by the President. The IGP has to obey all orders given by the President – whether lawful or not. These legal constraints make manipulation of the police by any President very easy. The President can easily remove any IGP

that does not play ball. That is why we have had about 13 IGPs in 15 years.

Operational Challenges: Lack of adequate equipment and tools is a major challenge for the police. Up to 40 per cent of officers are on personal guard duties to protect so-called very important persons (VIPs) who are public and private sector personalities. Regardless of the insufficient police personnel in the country, anyone that can afford to pay for their services gets an officer. This creates operational difficulties for the core policing functions given the scarcity of available officers.

Financial Challenges: In my view, not enough is being spent on policing in Nigeria. Nigerian police often receive support from donations and corporate goodwill. Basic infrastructure and equipment do not exist in many police locations. For instance, fingerprint searching and matching is done manually on paper cards using hand-held magnifying glass. The paper is kept in old filing cabinets. Even in Lagos, there is no computerized fingerprint database. Most officers buy their own uniforms and allowances are paid very late, if at all.

Environmental Challenges: The weakness and poor public perception of the criminal justice system (which includes courts, prosecution agencies, etc.) has collateral impact on the police. Proliferation of security outfits in Nigeria has also diluted the role of the police so much that people often get confused as to who to report certain crimes to. These disparate security agencies compete instead of co-operate with the police. For example, all private security firms in Nigeria are licensed by the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) and not the police. The firms pay millions of naira annually in registration fees to NSCDC, which keeps the police out of the loop of those security firms' operations.

Capacity Challenges: In addition to the personnel shortfall in the NPF, continuous training and validation of the existing workforce is not a widespread practice within the police. Even the recruitment system is so compromised and inefficient that you can finish a prison term for armed robbery in Kaduna today and join the

police in Abuja tomorrow. There is no central database of convicts. The recruitment process is not designed to accept only those who are qualified. Heads of police training colleges have tales of "instruction from above." This means that even when half of the applicants fail the recruitment course or examination, powerful individuals in government can order that they should be given a pass mark.

Historical Challenges: The military historically emasculated the police by usurping the functions of the force under the various Nigerian military dictatorships. Underfunding of the police can also be linked to this era. Even under the democratic dispensation, the police have not oriented itself with the principle of "policing by consent" to achieve legitimacy with the public.

Leadership Challenges: Removing IGPs in quick successions leaves the police force without much stability. This also deprives it of strategic focus since IGPs are not in office long enough to make strategic plans and impact. The uncertainty of their tenures does not support long-term strategic planning.

Political Challenges: There is too much political interference in policing in Nigeria. This demotivates good officers as political patronage becomes a basis for promotion and benefits. This interference has also reduced the number of Specialist Duty Officers in the NPF. These are the officers often requested to become security aides by Governors in violation of the police internal rules, which give such duties to General Duties officers. Once those officers assume the duty of protecting politicians, they usually never come back to their specialist posts.

The numerous problems of the Nigerian police are well known. But simply recruiting more officers will not solve the problems. Nigeria needs ethical police that respects and protects civil rights. While this requires proper training, the police need to be adequately funded to achieve this and improve the living conditions of the members of the force. Reforming and transforming policing in Nigeria would require addressing the numerous challenges mentioned above. The security of the life and property of every Nigerian depends on it. The prosperity and

economic wellbeing of the country depends on adequate security.

Conclusion

Issues and challenges of policing in contemporary Nigeria are numerous to be treated in this paper. However, some salient ones are analyzed. Basically, policing is essential part of human existence. Therefore, the primary responsibility of police officers and organizations is the protection of citizens by upholding the law and respecting the legally expressed will of the whole community and not a particular party or clique. On the other hand, contemporary policing requires more advanced technological equipment.

Thus, budgetary allocation to the police must be increased in order to have access to this modern equipment by the Nigeria Police Force. Additionally, some of the issues and challenges identified must be tackled to have a functional policing in this century. However, the Nigeria Police must be professionalized. Training and education are the two key ingredients of professionalism in policing. The major function of the police is to fight crime and there is greater hope in professionalizing the Nigeria Police by emphasizing that role. Finally, much still needs to be done towards changing the public perception of the police. Thus, concerted efforts at drastic reformation of the Nigerian Police will help it earn a more positive image in the society.

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