

# **INTERROGATING THE DISCREPANCY IN THE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN PERFORMANCES OF THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE, 1960-2019**

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## **Abstract**

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has since 1960, through its foreign missions, demonstrated in the international arena to be a symbol of excellence. The high level professionalism of men and officers of the force, for example, has earned the nation accolades, especially within the purview of international policing. It is, however, astonishing that such reports of credibility and honour cannot domesticated at locally. Domestically, the police has demonstrated mediocrity, brutality and all forms of unprofessional acts. The NPF is viewed as repressive, and widely despised by the members of the public. This paper examines the contradictions existing between the domestic and international output(s) or performances of the NPF between 1960 and 2019. The paper seeks to understand the reasons for the different performance levels. The study therefore tries to fill a literature gap on the local and international services of the NPF. The paper relies heavily on oral sources. Interviews were conducted with a focus group of Nigerian policemen, who have had both local and international service experiences. Relevant secondary data were also used. The approach used in assessing the data is descriptive and comparative.

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It is observed that, the domestic and foreign police missions have always presented different degrees of motivation, opportunities and experiences in terms of welfare, working condition, training and perception. The paper, therefore, concludes that the contradiction observed in the performances of the police was largely rooted in the different opportunities, perceptions and motivations that the two policing environments or systems had to offer.

**Keywords:** Nigeria Police Force, Domestic mission, International mission, Performances and Discrepancy

### **Introduction**

The primary responsibility of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is the maintenance of law and order within the territorial jurisdiction of Nigeria. However, the force has continued to perform secondary responsibilities such as international peacekeeping operations. For instance, it successfully participated in more than twenty international peacekeeping missions between 1960 and 2019.<sup>1</sup> The United Nations (UN), Organisation of African Unity (OAU) (now African Union (AU)) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) were the major sponsors or organisers of these missions.<sup>2</sup> In such instances, the institution always presented itself as a symbol of professionalism and excellence, making the nation proud in the comity of nations through its laudable performance.<sup>3</sup> However, such impressive record cannot be said about the domestic conduct or performance of the NPF. In other words, there was a wide gulf between the international and domestic performances and public perceptions of the NPF. Realising that Nigeria was the primary responsibility of the police, one cannot place too much emphasis on the fact that the NPF domestically continued to be inefficient, unprofessional, corrupt and repressive. These, in turn, successfully created a negative public perception of the police locally. Thus, there was

## **Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...**

wide range mistrust between the members of the Nigerian public and the police. It is on this premise that this study examines the reasons or justifications for the difference in the domestic and foreign performances of the NPF between 1960 and 2019. Though located within the wider perspective of policing, the paper seeks to fill a gap in literature, the domestic and international operations or services of the NPF. Ultimately, it is hoped that the paper will contribute to the on-going debate on the reform of the domestic performance of the NPF. The paper relies mainly on oral sources. Information was obtained through semi-structured interviews with Nigerian policemen cutting across different ranks in Abuja, Bauchi, Plateau, Lagos, Oyo, Kano, Rivers, Ondo, Edo and Delta States. All officers within the interview focus group had attended foreign missions under the United Nations, African Union or ECOWAS. Having experienced the two systems, information retrieved from the interviewees provided empirical evidence on the domestic and foreign policing systems. In addition, a few local newspapers such as the *Premium Times*, *Punch*, *Vanguard* and *Cable* provided further insights into policing in Nigeria.

The Nigeria Police Force is, perhaps, one of the Federal Government's establishments with a lot of existing literature. Many of the studies conducted across different disciplines such as history, law, political science, sociology and so on, have covered several aspects of the force, including its historical background, transformation, constitutional limit, operations, performance among other things. Although Onoja has argued that there is a need to institutionalise more studies dealing with the performance and whole issues of policing in colonial Nigeria,<sup>4</sup> it is a strong opinion of the present paper that it is more important to extend such studies to the contemporary period so they can be used as diagnoses for the current state of the performance of the NPF. In particular, studies focusing on the domestic performance and public perception of the NPF are not only closely related, but also insightful to this paper. For example, Karimu, assesses the performance of the Nigeria Police in crime prevention and

control from the perspectives of civilian population in communities within Ife Central, Ilesha West and Osogbo Local Government Areas of Osun State in South-west Nigeria. The paper observes and argues that the prevalent socio-political order in Nigeria has contributed to the rising cases of crimes in the country. Several factors within and outside the police control such as corruption, old and ineffective methods of policing, low budgetary allocation, insufficient facilities and equipment, inefficient synergy between the police and other law enforcement agencies, and poor police-public relationship, have remained major hindrances to successful crime fighting by the police.<sup>5</sup> Although the paper only covers a small part of the country, it gives an insight into many of the challenges confronting policing and contributing to poor performance of the NPF in Nigeria.

Another study by Alemika and Chukuwuma, examines the police-community violence in Nigeria. The work tries to understand the reason and the long-time impact of this trending pattern of police-communal relations on policing in the country. This form of violence was carefully differentiated from armed confrontations between the police and criminal gangs in the society. In other words, it was purely the type of crisis between the police and unarmed members of the society. According to the study, police violence against the community mainly arises from abuse of authority by policemen. On the other hand, community violence against the police often comes as reprisal attacks as such attacks are usually provoked by accumulated excesses of the police. In addition, the attacks are often prompted when the people are desperate for justice for crimes that the police committed against them, but it appears that the authorities saddled with such a responsibility will not live up to the expectation.<sup>6</sup> Like Karimu, the study does not only portrays a high level of mistrust between the police and members of the public, but also broadly provides a clue on the reasons that community policing has not been successful in Nigeria. Also, Agbiboa examines ‘the problem of corrupt and abusive policing in everyday Nigeria, with particular attention to the threat it poses

## **Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...**

to the basic human rights of ordinary citizens, many of whom see members of the NPF as enemies, not friends'.<sup>7</sup> The study identifies the sources of policing problem in Nigeria as the colonial and military strategic policies which played a decisive role in entrenching a culture of predation in the NPF. Thus, police misconduct in Nigeria is of a complex historical and societal condition than a purely managerial problem, 'whose solution lies in simplistic recommendations for internal reform or removal of so-called rotten apples'.<sup>8</sup> While colonial and post-colonial strategies and policies formed the bedrock of corrupt and abusive policing in Nigeria, this paper, however, thinks it will be misleading to overlook the contributions of the police administration to this bad culture. But by and large, the study reaffirms corruption as one of the banes of good or democratic policing in Nigeria.

At this juncture, it important to mention that extant literature, however, have not been restricted to the evaluation of the domestic activities of the NPF. There are other studies that have focused on the international operations and performance of the NPF. For example, while discussing the trends in African police contributions to international peacekeeping missions, Levine observed that Nigeria and Senegal traditionally fall 'among the top 100, if not top 10, police-contributing countries (PCCs)' <sup>9</sup> to the United Nations international peacekeeping operations. Specifically, Cameroon, Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal accounted for 56.9 percent of African counterpart of the United Nations Police (UNPOL). While contribution of personnel might appear in term of ordinary number, it was also an indication of competence and capacity to deliver up to the expectation of the UNPOL. And as a mark of honour and recognition for their contributions to international peace and the need to strengthen the international police community, the UN has continued to involve Nigeria and Senegal in its police planning. 'For instance, the head of the Nigerian police and a former prime minister of Senegal were invited 2007 to join the UN's International Police Advisory Council (IPAC) as full

members'.<sup>10</sup> Also, Okajare and Famoye examines the participation and performance of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) in international peacekeeping within the purview of how states in the 'contemporary international system have skilfully engaged their domestic institutions—not formally established for external relations purposes—for the promotion and attainment of their foreign policy objectives and national interest'.<sup>11</sup> The study interrogates the nature and content of Nigeria Police's international peacekeeping activities, and sustains that 'though the NPF has had the maintenance of security and order within the domestic space of Nigeria as its main responsibility since its inception, it still functions as an instrument of foreign policy, and through its participation in international peacekeeping operations across the world, the nation has successfully achieved some of her foreign policy goals'.<sup>12</sup> It is submitted that the attainment of some of the Nigeria's foreign policy goals through the participation of the NPF in international peacekeeping missions was possible not because the government chose to engage it as part of its extended foreign policy strategies, but because of the brilliant performance of the force in such international outings. Thus, through such opportunities the NPF was able to carve a niche for itself in international policing and also write the country's name in gold in the search for international peace and order.<sup>13</sup>

While extant literature has revealed a difference in the performances and public perceptions of the NPF locally and internationally, there is, however, a need to understand the reasons for the difference in the performances. Was it a case of different welfare packages, motivations, working conditions, perceptions or administrative policies presented by the policing systems, or a combination of all of these factors? It is this literature gap that the paper sets out to fill. And to do this, the paper embarks on a comparative analysis of the two mission areas. The paper is divided into three sections. The first section introduces the central theme of the discourse, while the second considers the existing literature. The third section discusses the

## **Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...**

reasons for the discrepancy in the national and international performances of the NPF. The fourth section concludes the work, submitting that the discrepancy observed in the performances of the police is largely rooted in the different opportunities and motivation presented by the two policing environments or systems.

### **Interrogating the Basis for the Contradiction in International and Domestic Performances of the NPF**

This section of the paper interrogates the reasons or causes of the difference between the local and foreign performances of the NPF during the period under review. The paper comparatively examines the two systems within the contexts of welfare, condition of service, training and monitoring and as well as the overall perception and approach of the NPF to the two policing environments.

#### ***Welfare***

Based on the empirical evidence provided by the information obtained from the policemen interviewed, it has been considerably established that a wide gulf exists between the welfare packages offered in the domestic and foreign missions. As said earlier, international police missions were usually under the auspices of international or regional organisations. While the welfare packages provided by these organisations differed, depending on their financial strengths, they were usually within a reasonably acceptable standard. For example, as of 2017, a sum of \$1,410 per policemen per month was the UN approved reimbursement for the countries contributing personnel to its mission.<sup>14</sup> At the rate of N350 per \$1, it meant that a Nigerian policeman serving in a UN peacekeeping mission was entitled to N507,600 per month, whereas, the monthly salary of the Inspector General of Police, the highest paid policeman, was N711,498.<sup>15</sup> More importantly was the fact that these benefits are promptly released to the participating nations. In addition, adequate provisions were usually made for other components of

welfare including accommodation, kits, first aid medical care and feeding such that the policemen would not have to worry about anything other than the optimum discharge of their responsibilities according to the rules of engagement. According to a policeman, who served in Liberia:

Probably because they had an accurate number of the policemen coming for the operation, they had made enough provisions for accommodation with functional toilets and other facilities, even before we arrived. While it might not be like your home, they did everything to make us feel at home. The workload was structured to discourage fatigue. And there were provisions for physical fitness facilities, but I use to play football because I loved it and could play very well.

On the contrary, the domestic scene provided an unattractive welfare package for policemen. To start with, policemen in Nigeria fell among the poorly paid sectors within the country, probably a little better than the education sector. It was even worse, when the country with all the wealth paid less than its poorer neighbours such as Ghana.<sup>16</sup> Without reasonable health insurance, befitting housing scheme or hazard allowances, policemen were also victims of the government's tradition of non-prompt payment of salaries and allowances of its personnel. In 2002, for instance, the entire nation was thrown into panic and embarrassment when policemen across the national went on a nationwide strike due to the delay in the payment of their salaries.<sup>17</sup> It should be noted that even before and after the 2002 strike, there had been threats of nationwide strike by the police, except that compromised were always reached just before the expiration of the ultimatums.<sup>18</sup> The above implied that the welfare of policemen might not a priority of the successive Nigerian governments. It is important to note that several psychological studies have established beyond reasonable doubts



## **Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...**

that a strong link exists between welfare and staff performance.<sup>19</sup> In other words, workers are usually motivated by the quantity and quality of their welfare packages. Thus, a worker who earns lower than what is expected or satisfactory may not input his/her best performance into product and vice versa. If the above stand, there is a strong indication, therefore, that the difference in the welfare packages of local and foreign policing environments was partly responsible for the discrepancy in the outputs of the NPF. Information provided by another policeman, who attended the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Congo strongly supports this:

My brother, why do you think every policeman in Nigeria wants to have a taste of foreign missions? One of the main reasons is the attractive welfare package. See eh, you cannot compare what we earn as salary here to what you get as allowance in international operations. *'Them no just match at all'*. Our government is trying, but they need to upgrade our welfare so we can deliver better. We will work better when we don't have to worry about how to pay rent, NEPA bill, school fee and feed our families. Why do you think Nigerian policemen are performing wonders outside the country? It is not magic; it is because there, we don't have to worry about anything, except how to do our job well.

In another interview, a policeman, who had served in Sierra Leone, commented thus:

In our days, things were very different between what we received as welfare package in Nigeria and in foreign missions. In monetary and other aspects of welfare, Nigeria was not up to standard in comparison with the foreign

missions. Let us talk about accommodation for example. In foreign mission, your accommodation, with basic necessities, was already provided even before your arrival. But what did you have in Nigeria, no or bad accommodation for police officers. Even now, look at our barracks in Lagos and other parts of the country and you will be sorry for us. Some of us who don't live in the barracks have to leave far away from our stations. Imagine policemen facing the 'go slow' of Lagos everyday and you want them to give their best when they are already tired before they get to work?

The importance of the police to the survival and sustenance of democracy since 1999 cannot be overemphasised, especially as it relates to elections. The role of the police during elections extends beyond the maintenance of peace and tranquillity; it also involves the protection of the lives of the people, election materials and the sanctity of the whole election process.<sup>20</sup> One would want to believe that the main reason that policemen were usually posted out of their service areas during elections and meant to be paid certain allowances for such a special duty was to ensure that they discharge their responsibilities without prejudice. However, this aim was defeated severely as there were always problems with the payment of such allowances to the deserving officers. It was either they were never paid on time or the officers were short changed.<sup>21</sup> In some instances, the policemen had to publicly protest to get their entitlements.<sup>22</sup> While more dedicated studies may still be required, a report by the Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN), a foremost Nigerian NGO that focuses on police—civilian relations in the country, and a larger percentage of the officers interviewed, including a few members of police team that we got into a friendly open discussion when they came on a special duty to Owo in Ondo State during the 2016 gubernatorial election, agreed that there was a strong connection

## **Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...**

between the misconduct of policemen during elections and the nonchalant attitude of the government towards their welfare.<sup>23</sup>

It can be deduced from the foregoing that first, the domestic and foreign operations of the NPF presented different welfare packages. Secondly, the welfare package in foreign mission was much more attractive than the one made available locally. Thirdly, there was a magnetic progression between welfare and performance: performance was good in international operations where there was an attractive welfare, while performance at home was poor where the welfare was also poor. In other words, the welfare package in international operations seemed to have motivated the NPF personnel better than its domestic counterpart. Ultimately, there is a strong indication that the difference in welfare packages partly contributed to the difference in performances of the NPF in the two policing systems.

### ***Condition of Service***

Closely related to welfare is the condition of service. And like welfare, the domestic and foreign scenes also presented contrasting templates. Condition of service in this context refers to the structure of assignment details, quality and quantity of human and equipment available for operations. A major feature of foreign missions, for example, was that the sponsors or organisers gave premium attention to the condition under which their personnel operated.<sup>24</sup> This often came in form of relatively adequate personnel, provision of adequate and functional logistics that would assist the officers to efficiently dispense their duties.<sup>25</sup> Such logistics involved patrol vehicles, Information Communication Technology (ICT) gadgets, ammunition and so on. Thus, an atmosphere was created, where policemen would not have to worry about the non-availability of the equipment to carry out their functions, but are strictly concerned with using the equipment to deliver efficiently on the mandate given to them according to the guidelines provided.<sup>26</sup> But again, the domestic working condition stands in parallel position to what is witnessed

in foreign mission. In the first instance, the NPF was quiet short staffed, which continued to put undue pressure on the available policemen, who have to maintain peace and order among a large population. It should be noted also that it was from this insufficient police population that policemen were still sent for overseas missions. As if this was not enough, the NPF was also faced with the challenge of lack or inadequate equipment. Historically, subsequent administrations, military and civilian, in Nigeria had either neglected or given little attention to police logistics since 1960.<sup>27</sup> There had been complaints by Nigerians of how they had called for the police intervention during robbery cases, but had been turned down for reasons including non-functioning patrol vehicles, no fuel in the patrol vehicles or insufficient arms and bullets to confront the robbers.<sup>28</sup>

While on a journey between Benin and Asaba in 2013, a policeman at one of the numerous checkpoints aggressively defended their illegal toll collection on the basis that substantial parts of the proceeds were used to fuel the patrol vehicles and maintain their stations. The claim of that policeman was, however, confirmed three years later (2016), when Fatai Owoseni, a former Lagos Commissioner of Police said that every police station in Nigeria officially received a running cost of 45,000 Naira only once in every three months.<sup>29</sup> This meant a budget of 15,000 Naira only for every police station in a month. At 65 Naira per litre of petrol in 2016, one wonders how many vehicles that such an amount could fuel, not to mention the servicing of the vehicles, in a month. In 2018, a sum of 586,448,863 Naira was allocated for fuelling of vehicles for the year. If divided among 1,579 police stations in the country, it only gave a sum of 1,017 Naira per day,<sup>30</sup> which was still far below what was needed.

Due to the lack of modern equipment, police activities such as documentation and investigation of crimes were mostly done manually, making crime investigation and detection very difficult. Over reliance on manual method of crime investigation was largely not only responsible for the inability of the police to pursue a lot of criminal cases to logical conclusions, but also gave

## **Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...**

room for the manipulation of cases. It is interesting to note that as a member the INTERPOL, the NPF had a granted access to the data base of the international police body through the West African Police Information System (WAPIS).<sup>31</sup> However, the lack of the means to electronically retrieve, process and share such information in a structured way hindered the NPF from fully harnessing the opportunity. It can be inferred from the above that the working condition in each environment strongly influenced the performance level of the NPF, hereby contributing to the difference in the overall domestic and international performances. One of the policemen interviewed seemed to have captured it well when he said that:

I know there are few incompetent policemen in Nigeria, but I can tell you, majority of us including myself are professionals, very good at our work. The problem has always been equipment, even you yourself know this. What we lack in Nigeria is equipment. Give us the necessary equipment and watch us. The reason we perform very well in international assignment since 1960 is because outside there, we have better equipment to do the job. Policemen from other countries always love to work with our policemen because we are very good. Ok, if there is a robbery incident now, as policemen, we need equipment- perfect gun with enough bullets, good vehicle, bulletproof and so on to tackle the armed robbers. But when all these are not available, as a team leader, I will have to think about the safety of my men because I am accountable for their lives: they also have families. So, I may have to reach out to the next station for necessary support, which will take time. And you know in crime fighting, time is very important. This is what happens many times when people phone a police

station about certain incident and we don't show up immediately.

### ***Training and Monitoring***

Like welfare and logistics, international mission organisers also paid serious attention to the training and monitoring of their officers to ensure they operated within the international best practices.<sup>32</sup> The usual practice was to first ensure that the contributing nations nominate some of their finest officers. Besides, necessary provisions were made to ensure that the contributing nations give the right training to the officers they would be sending to the foreign missions. This sometimes included training assistance or provision of training manuals and facilities for the participating countries. Even while on the mission, they never cease to train their personnel, who would have come from different parts of the world.<sup>33</sup> Sponsors of international missions did not also joke with reports or feedbacks about their officers from the host communities. They were always quick in responding and such feedbacks always formed the basis for the sustenance or restructuring of their strategies. For example, Section DI, Item 19 of the '2016 Guidelines for the Police Command in United Nations Peacekeeping Operations and Special Political Mission' is clear about the UN Zero tolerance for misconduct by its policemen:

United Nations police commanders at all levels shall hold themselves and their subordinates rigorously accountable for observing the United Nations standards of conduct, including provisions related to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and the zero-tolerance policy regarding that. The United Nations standards of conduct specifically prohibit sexual relations with prostitutes and with any persons under 18 years old, regardless of the age of consent in the host State, and strongly discourage relations with beneficiaries of assistance such as food, housing

## **Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...**

or aid as a result of a conflict, natural disaster or other humanitarian crisis or in a development setting. Mission-specific directives prohibiting fraternization, except where it relates to professional relationships needed to achieve the mandate, may also be issued. United Nations police commanders shall take appropriate measures to ensure that subordinates abide by the United Nations standards of conduct and report any violations thereof.<sup>34</sup>

The United Nations, which was the largest sponsor of international peacekeeping operations, was always prompt not only in commending or rewarding outstanding policemen, but also in handing out appropriate sanctions to erring officers. Such swiftness to damage control was demonstrated in 2005, for example, when eleven officers of the NPF serving under the United Nations' mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo were accused of gross misconduct, such as rape. The organiser quickly stepped in by investigating the allegation and, according to the United Nations policy, handing over the erring officers to the NPF for further sanctions.<sup>35</sup> Battered by the international disrepute the event had brought on it and the nation at large, the NPF leadership under Ehindero quickly withdrew the whole contingent of 120 policemen from the operation.<sup>36</sup> Also in 2018, another Nigeria policeman was withdrawn and handed a life ban from international peacekeeping by the United Nations after it was substantially established that he had sexually exploited a Congolese woman and thereafter bribed the victim to manipulate the investigation process.<sup>37</sup> But as usual, the domestic scene largely differed. A major bane of Nigerian development is corruption, which cuts across all of its sectors. And as part of the structure, the NPF was not excluded from the extended decadence and systemic corruption. In the first instance, the enlistment procedure into the police was highly compromised. Aside the fact that the enlistment process was usually marred with no proper background check of applicants, the chances to be employed as a

policeman largely depended on one's political patronage or connections with influential persons in the society.<sup>38</sup> The socio-economic situation in the country, especially in relation to the high level unemployment rate, continued to promote this practice. The implication of this was that, the nation often lost the opportunity to have many of its responsible and mentally fit citizens enrolled into the system. On the other hand, such an enlistment process could only have given the bad elements in the society a better chance to serve in the force. Most importantly, one could not have expected the loyalty of these policemen, who had come into the force through a compromised process, to the country but to their benefactors.

Furthermore, the subsequent political administrations in Nigeria did not give deserving attention to the training of police personnel. There is no gainsaying that training and retraining of personnel is essential to police performance, not only in policing, but in all professions. Through such avenues, the personnel are not only familiar with the new trends and challenges in their professions, but also learn how to engage the latest technology and methods in dealing with the challenges. Historically, the problem of inadequate training was inflicted on the NPF by the military during its long years of political intervention. In fact, up to the late 1970s, training and retraining of policemen, even in specialised departments, was an established tradition in the country.<sup>39</sup> For example, aside the police training colleges, there were specialised training schools such as the Detective, Anti-Fraud, Photographic and Fingerprints Training Schools in strategic places across the nation to train officers in these specific fields.<sup>40</sup> However, things began to look grey after this period. The outrageous plan of the subsequent military administrations to destroy every remnant structure of civility in Nigeria led to a deliberately disruption of the pre-existing order in the police. Consequently, there was a suspension of training of policemen for several years. This was immediately followed by the compulsory mass retirement of senior police officers in the 1980s.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately, the system did not get significantly better ever



## **Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...**

since. The consequences of a bad cop without proper professional training can best be imagined.

Various studies have shown that sources of corruption in the Nigeria Police range from the involvement in electoral frauds and organised crimes, non-observance of rule of law, unlawful exercise of power and so on.<sup>42</sup> Among these, police unlawful exercise of power or excesses often came in form of physical assault and extra judicial killing of civilians.<sup>43</sup> The culture of police brutality against the civilian population of Nigeria started with the foundation of the police during the colonial period. Unlike in Britain, where police emerged as a social demand for the maintenance of social order, the NPF evolved as a British weapon for the intimidation, oppression and exploitation of the colony, Nigerian. As rewards for their services, the colonial policemen got preferential treatment and material gifts from the colonial masters.<sup>44</sup> Although colonialism ended decades ago; the breakdown of ideal societal values has continued to sustain police malpractice. The Nigerian political elite comfortably assumed the former position of the colonial masters and continued to use the police against the public interest. A recent study by Balogun, which assesses the involvement of the NPF in the Action Congress of 1962, provides a historical insight into how the police was continually an instrument of intimidation and oppression in the hands of the ruling elite in post-independence Nigeria. The work demonstrates how the Northern People's Congress (NPC)/National Convention of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) coalition government successfully used the NPF to cripple the opposition party, Action Congress (AG), and allowed the political crisis in Southwest to linger until the intervention of the military in January, 1966.<sup>45</sup> This is just an illustration of how the political class constantly manoeuvred the police to suit their purpose.

All the while, it appeared that Nigeria Police became conscious of the trend and continued to adjust appropriately as the corrupt practices of the police, such as brutality against the civilian citizens, continued for long. The continuity could have been strengthened as it seemed that the policemen over times had

came to understand that there was no strong political will by the constituted authorities to prosecute or make erring policemen accountable for their actions, except when there were vested interests or such offenses were capable of bringing both huge national and international embarrassment to the country. In 2007 for example, Ehindero, while basking in the euphoria of his appointment as the Inspector General of Police, ‘announced that more than 10,000 corrupt officers would be dismissed, but the sackings were token’ in the end.<sup>46</sup> In fact, Ehindero himself was later accused of contributing to the violence that rocked the presidential election of April 2007. He was said to have collected 200 million naira from the ruling party to rig the election.<sup>47</sup>

Some victims of the police misconduct, who seemed to have had good understanding of the body language of the authorities and had little or no trust in the justice system, would rather not prosecute their cases against the police, especially for fear of further persecution by the police.<sup>48</sup> This explains why on several occasions, even with overwhelming evidence, many erring policemen go unpunished for their misconducts. In a trend, policemen had always taken advantage of the weak links to get away with crimes. This reminds one of Queen Okoye’s case in 2008/2009. The young woman was said to have gone to Area G Police Station at Ogba in Lagos to report her boyfriend that she claimed had stolen a sum of 30,000 Naira from her. It was reported that the policemen on duty did not only fail to address her complaint, but also detained her till late in the night. She was later gang-raped by many policemen on duty that night. Subsequently, she became pregnant. She later reported the case to the police authority and got no response and when she protested further, the police authority simply dismissed her claim on the basis that she was mentally unstable.<sup>49</sup> Dismissing the complaint of the young woman without looking into it, could only have encouraged the officers to do more and even worse. This systemic failure of the justice system to protect the victims of police brutality was a major cause of the community violence against the police that Alemika speaks about.<sup>50</sup> Thus, while training and

## **Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...**

monitoring were prioritised in international policing environment, the domestic scene showed a negligence of these crucial factors by the government and the management of the NPF. The international scene was not entirely free of corrupt practices by Nigerian policemen; it seemed, however, that the promptness and effectiveness of the disciplinary mechanisms acted as deterrents, leading to a few cases of corruption recorded. On the contrary, the domestic operations of the NPF, where little or no attention was given to training, monitoring and discipline of erring officers, was marred with overwhelming cases of police corruption. On a whole, there is a clear suggestion that the different approaches to training and monitoring of the police considerably contributed to the discrepancy witnessed in the domestic and international performances of the NPF.

### ***Perception***

Perception in this context refers to the NPF's definition or viewpoint on policing in domestic and foreign missions. However, analysing how the perception of the NPF influenced its performances requires an understanding of its (NPF) place in the authority hierarchy in the two domains. Nationally, the NPF occupied the second layer of authority as the Federal Government largely represented by the President as the nation's chief security officer occupied the first ladder of authority. This explains why the Inspector General of Police (IGP) was responsible and took orders from the president only. And as rightly argued by Hill, the president was the most important influence in policing matters in Nigeria as all crucial matters has to end on his table.<sup>51</sup> As the final authority, his perception and by extension that of his cronies or the entire political elite, always formed the paradigm for the NPF understanding of policing in Nigeria. Hills has also provided examples of how various IGP's between 1999 and 2012 continued to adjust their agenda and reform plans to suit the views and campaign programmes of the different presidents.<sup>52</sup> For example, as an IGP, Tafa Balogun's anti-corruption campaign of 2002 was informed by Obasanjo's policy of 'due process, transparency and accountability in public affairs', though he was later dismissed

based on allegation of gross misconduct and corruption levelled against him. Similarly, after Yar'Adua's appointment of Mike Okiro as IGP in 2007, the IGP commenced his tenure with a pronouncement of an eight-point reform plan of community policing that corresponded with Yar'Adua's seven-point agenda of liberal governance. But as mentioned earlier, those plans were not necessarily meant for what is right or to bring about policing for justice, but ultimately for the satisfaction of vested interests of the ruling elite.<sup>53</sup> In fact, the interpretation or understanding of policing by the NPF management since colonialism was the satisfaction of the political class. But also like already established, the policing perception of the political elite right from time had been the protection of their vested interests, which most times ran contrary to ethical policing. But as the police leadership continued to hold office at the prerogative of the political elite and owed its allegiance to whoever was in control of the Federal Executive power, its approach had been to carefully avoid anything that could bring a clash of interests between it and its lord. So, it appeared largely that the NPF did not only use the view of the political elite to form its own perception of domestic policing, it also became a tool for the execution of the aims of the privilege class, not a societal instrument to ensure democratic policing. One wonders how many police chiefs in Nigeria could publicly share a contrary opinion with the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, let alone confronting him like the Police Chief of Houston, Art Acevedo, who told President Trump on an international TV to keep his 'mouth shut' if he could not be constructive in matters relating to the Black Lives Matter protests, which had erupted after the killing of George Floyd.<sup>54</sup> In his opinion, Trump's unguarded statement and warning to the governors to engage the use of force to put an end to looting and violence that characterised the protests was only making the work of the police more difficult.<sup>55</sup> Such can only happen in countries like the United States, where policing is more democratic. The consequences of such boldness or 'insubordination' could best be

## **Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...**

imagined in an environment like Nigeria, where the police was a 'pen' in the hands of the president at the expense national interest.

Internationally, the NPF's perception of policing was not independent of the scope of the sponsors of the foreign missions. However, the sponsors' perspective or definition of policing clearly differed from the domestic political elite. Unlike the Nigerian political elite, the United Nation's perception or mandate of policing, from where other sponsors of international police operations drew their inspirations, was mainly about democratic policing for the rule of law. According to the 2014 United Nations' police policy its core perspective on policing included effective maintenance of public order through prevention, detection, and investigation of crime for the protection of life and property. The mandate also included the reform and restructure of local police forces in line with the model of democratic policing.<sup>56</sup> It follows from the foregoing, therefore, that the NPF, at the local and international levels, did lack the independence to self-define policing. While the national perception seemed to serve the interests of the privileged class, the international view was more of democratic or policing for justice. These perceptions appeared to have influenced the approach of the NPF to the mission fields. Thus, the force was caught with the politics of how to serve and remain relevant in the two system services with opposing ideas of policing. By and large, there is a strong indication that the NPF's discharge its responsibilities according to the prescriptions of its instructors partly contributed to the perceived difference in its outputs or performances domestically and internationally.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has examined the fundamental factors that were responsible for the difference between the domestic and international performances of the NPF between 1960 and 2019. It is observed that there was a wide gulf between what the domestic and international environments had to offer in terms of welfare package, condition of service, training and monitoring as well as the perception on policing. The welfare package in foreign

mission was more attractive and motivating than what was offered domestically. The availability of adequate logistics in international operation made the job easier and more effective, than in the home front, where lack of basic equipment was a major challenge of policing. Also, while training, monitoring and discipline were highly enforced in foreign missions, such were largely given little attention locally. Furthermore, in international mission, the viewpoint on policing was largely towards democratic policing for justice for all members of the society, while domestically, policing was more of an instrument for the attainment of vested interests of the privileged members of the society. Ultimately, all of these factors considerably contributed to the difference in the domestic and international output of the police. The paper concludes that the contradiction observed in the foreign and domestic performances of the NPF was largely rooted in the different opportunities, perceptions and motivations existing in the policing environments or systems.

## Famoye: Interrogating the Discrepancy...

### Endnotes

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