

**SOCIO ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF POLICE CORRUPTION ON CRIME  
PREVENTION AND CONTROL IN AWKA SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA  
OF ANAMBRA STATE**

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**Abstract**

Police corruption seems to have defied the myriad efforts put in place to redress it in Nigeria. It is almost incontrovertible that a corrupt police force may not in practical terms be effective in crime prevention and control. This is against the backdrop that the supposedly institutional mechanisms put in place to check these excesses are either weak or nonexistent. This paper therefore investigated the socio economic implications of police corruption on crime prevention and control in Awka South Local Government Area (LGA) of Anambra state. Awka south LGA was chosen purposively because Awka metropolis is situated there and Awka metropolis is the capital of Anambra state. Wilson and Kelling's Broken Window Theory constituted the theoretical framework for the paper. The mixed methods design was adopted and a sample size of 400 study participants was chosen by the researchers. Quantitative data collated were processed with the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics involving the use of frequency counts and percents were used for analyzing the quantitative data while the study hypotheses were tested with the chi square test statistic. It was found among others that greed in the police force was partly responsible for inability of the police to prevent and control crime in Awka south LGA. Weak institutional mechanisms and the prevailing value system in the country were found to exacerbate police corruption in Awka south LGA. The paper therefore recommended among several others the need to strengthen the nation's institutions to become responsive and proactive. It was also suggested that it has become imperative for change in our value system to mitigate the propensity for material acquisitiveness.

**Keywords: Police, Corruption, Crime, Value system, Institutional mechanisms**

**Introduction**

The police are the law enforcement agents of the state. They are meant to protect the citizenry. One of the duties of the police is that of crime prevention and detection. The Police Act CAP 359 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990 states that: "*The police shall be employed for prevention and detection of crime....*" It appears that this provision has been violated consequent upon the endemic corruption in the force. Police corruption has become an intractable problem in our

contemporary Nigerian society. Worobleski and Hess (2003) stressed that police corruption vary greatly in kind, degree and complexity, but they all have key elements in common; the conduct is prohibited by the law and it involves misuse of position. Police corruption includes a wide variety of prohibited behaviour, either crime or departmental; rule violations committed under the auspices of a police officer's position. *According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2004), while corruption is endemic in all segments of the Nigerian society, it is particularly objectionable among the police because it is their occupational responsibility to prevent and work at its elimination.*

Several attempts have been made to stem the phenomenon by successive governments in recent time with little or no meaningful successes. It appears that corruption has been officially instituted in the country. This is as a result of its pervasive nature. Police corruption is unarguably an excerpt of corruption in the larger society. Several definitions have been adduced on corruption. However, for the purposes of this paper, corruption could be seen as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain (Transparency International, 2016). In the same manner, police corruption can be said to occur when the police abuse the powers constitutionally entrusted to them for private gains. Police corruption has far reaching socio-economic implications. Prominent among them is the inability of the force to effectively carryout their statutory functions of crime prevention and control. A corrupt police force is already compromised and therefore very likely to fail in the performance of their basic functions to the society. This paper attempts to examine the socio-economic implications of police corruption on crime prevention and control in Awka South local government area.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Police corruption has impacted negatively on the Nigerian society. It has frustrated efforts geared towards the realization of several policies and programmes which would have led to making the country a preferred destination for both citizens and foreigners alike. Police corruption is very manifest in Awka metropolis in particular and Awka south in general. Several police checkpoints could be seen in the LGA. These police checkpoints were mainly avenues for exploiting motorists in particular. The police stations located in the LGA are not free of corrupt practices. Bail is free only in principle and not in practice in the police stations in the LGA. There were instances where personnel of the police force were alleged to be involved in high profile criminal activities like armed robbery and kidnapping.

Corruption is prevalent in the Nigerian society; however, it is highly objectionable for the police to be actively involved in it since they are the agency of government saddled with the onerous responsibility of preventing and controlling it. Several efforts had been put in place to curtail police corruption in the country; it appears these efforts did not yield the desired objectives. Several people were extra judiciously exterminated for not yielding to the antics of the corrupt elements in the force. The slogan that "The Police is your Friend" is seen by many as one of the most unreliable statements that anyone can make in our country Nigeria. This is why Uhakeme (2006) sees the police as the initiators and practitioners of corruption in Nigeria. Several works have been done on police corruption in Nigeria. However, none has been carried out to investigate the socio economic implications of police corruption on crime prevention and control in Awka South LGA. This paper is therefore poised on investigating the socio-economic implications of police corruption on crime prevention and control in Awka South LGA.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The general objective of this paper is to investigate the socio-economic implications of police corruption on crime prevention and control in Awka south LGA. This will be achieved through the following specific objectives;

- ❖ To determine the forms of police corruption in Awka South LGA.
- ❖ To identify factors responsible for police corruption in Awka South LGA.
- ❖ To ascertain the implications of police corruption on crime prevention and control in Awka South LGA.
- ❖ To suggest ways of curbing police corruption in Awka South LGA.

### **Study Hypotheses**

- i) Older respondents are more likely to become victims of police corruption than their younger counterparts in Awka South LGA.
- ii) Drivers and traders are more likely to rate police corruption higher than other occupational groups in Awka South LGA.

### **Literature Review**

Related literatures were reviewed thematically alongside the study objectives. This is with the view to understanding the patterns and complexity of the issue at hand.

### **Forms of Police Corruption**

Police corruption could be seen from several dimensions. According to Akpunonu-Ogu (2014), police corruption appears to occur both passively and actively. Passive corruption occurs when a police officer is approached with a favour or a request. For instance, someone may offer gratification bribe, such as money, gifts or liquor, in exchange for a favour from the police officer. On the other hand, active corruption occurs if a police officer appears to initiate the act of bribery by approaching an offender with the purpose of selling a favour in order to protect the offender. This is usually carried out through intimidation, threatening or blackmailing. One of the common forms of police corruption is bribery and extortion. Akpunonu-Ogu (2014) maintains that bribery and extortion by the police on traffic duty is the most common and unbearable form of corruption in the force. Policemen responsible for checking vehicle licenses, road worthiness and other duties are found extorting money from private and commercial drivers. Police corruption includes mounting illegal tolls (road blocks) on the nation's local and highways; accepting of bribe to pervert justice; illegal detention of citizens; squeezing money from detainees' relations in the name of buying pen, foolscap sheets and files; collecting huge sums of money to effect bail for detainees; and colluding with criminals, election riggers, fraudsters, assassins and bunkers (Ingiabuna and Uzobo, 2017; Ifeanyichukwu, 2017). Other forms of police corruption are closure of case files, escorting vehicles loaded with contraband goods and stolen items, stealing from suspects and or accident victims, stealing from crime scenes, supply of police arms and ammunition with police uniforms to criminals for monetary gain etc (Adegoke, 2014).

### **Factors Responsible for Police Corruption**

Several factors have been adduced as responsible for police corruption. For instance, Egbedina, Popoola and Lawal (2014) enumerated some of the factors responsible for police corruption to include inadequate/irregular salary, inadequate manpower, improper training, lack of adequate

professionalism; lack of necessary equipment, lack of adequate welfare package and functional law. It is often said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. This maxim is exactly the reality with the Nigeria police. According to Onyeozili (2005), combining order maintenance with prosecutorial responsibility amounts to over burdening the police. To make the police more effective, it should hands-off criminal prosecution and defer to another government agency like the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP). Fear of prosecution by an independent agency will also reinforce discipline and make it easier to control police corruption and excesses. Akpunonu-Ogu (2014) stressed that greed is one of the factors that predisposes the police to corruption. This is almost a general problem in the society. This explains why Umez (2000) maintained that the prevailing value system in the country which glorifies affluence and get rich quick syndrome must be deemphasized. Similarly, Ugwuoke (2005) argued that the insatiable and inordinate urge to acquire and own property by some Nigerians account for the genesis of the different crimes in the country. The police in Nigeria are not exempted from this.

### **Implications of Police Corruption on Crime Prevention and Control**

According to Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) (2008), the effects of corruption are social and economic. Governments and communities suffer from the malaise as it makes them uneconomic because less revenue is collected, with a loss to government much greater than the individual gains; more money is paid for the goods and services procured. As a result of corruption, policies are distorted to maximise corrupt gains, usually in favour of capital intensive spending; resources are diverted away from social and developmental priorities and investment is discouraged (ICPC, 2008). Police corruption has dire consequences which are far reaching. Onyeozili (2005) contends that corruption gave the Nigeria Police Force a poor image in the Nigerian society. He sees the corruption in the Nigeria police force as a reflection of the social malaise that bestrides the Nigerian society. According to Egbedina, Popoola and Lawal (2014), corruption has gradually infiltrated and over whelmed the entire police system to the extent that their constitutional right to prevent and maintain law and order has gradually become weak and their effectiveness questioned. A corrupt police person is already a compromised person. His integrity is questionable and judgement impaired. It is obvious that a corrupt police person will look the other way when things are going wrong. This is because he/she lacks the moral fibre to confront the situation. Just as the saying goes 'he who lives in glass house should not throw stone'. A corrupt police officer will not have the boldness to fight corruption. This is particularly evident when the person's unpleasant past records can be used to blackmail him/her. Adongoi and Abraham (2017) argued that the negative effect of police corruption could also be seen in the failure of government to perform its regulatory functions. Government is not able to perform satisfactorily its regulatory role over financial institutions, hospitals, transportation and of protecting lives and property because somebody is there to give or take bribe. The police have been accused of aiding and abetting crimes because of their corrupt tendency. When police escort vehicles loaded with contraband goods and stolen items, steal from suspects and or accident victims, steal from crime scenes, supply police arms and ammunition with police uniforms to criminals for monetary gain etc (Adegoke, 2014), it becomes difficult to actually prevent and control crime in the society. Police are guilty of colluding with criminals, election riggers, fraudsters, assassins and bunkers (Ingiabuna and Uzobo, 2017; Ifeanyichukwu, 2017). This explains why criminals do so with impunity because they will not be brought to book. A corrupt police force cannot and will not fight crime anywhere anytime. Ibrahim (2015) contended that due to corruption, rules and regulations are manipulated

and operated in a confusing and impenetrable manner in the implementation end to enable police to collect bribes and other personal advantages, and as the police officers are preoccupied with other tasks, insecurity hampers investments, peace security and safety shrink further and its ability to protect life and property is shattered.

### **Ways of Curbing Police Corruption**

Police corruption can be minimized in the country. It could start with value reorientation. The political class, civil/public servants and every stakeholder in the country need to deemphasize unnecessary desire to accumulate wealth. Primitive acquisition of wealth should not be condoned. The values for hard work and honesty should be commended, rewarded and promoted in place of affluence and unnecessary penchant for acquisitiveness. According to the ICPC (2008), at the organisational level, controlling corruption requires strong and determined leadership, because corruption occurs at the very top as well as the bottom and all points in between in the hierarchy. The top brass of the police hierarchy must make it clear that corruption in all its forms will not be tolerated and furthermore will be severely punished. Human Rights Watch (2010) suggested far reaching solutions to police corruption in Nigeria. According to the organization, *an independent commission of inquiry with subpoena power to conduct a transparent, comprehensive, and impartial investigation into systemic corruption within the Nigeria Police Force should be established. There is the need to prosecute without delay and according to international fair trial standards any police officer implicated in corruption and other serious abuses. The financial oversight of the Nigeria Police Force should also be improved* (Human Rights Watch, 2010). The office of the inspector general of police should be for a one term five year tenure subject to confirmation of appointment as well as removal by a two-thirds majority vote in the senate. The National Assembly should *hold regular public hearings into the conduct of the Nigeria Police Force in the respective police affairs committees in the Senate and House of Representatives* (Human Rights Watch, 2010). These will go a long way at reducing police corruption in the country.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper is anchored on the Broken Window Theory. The theory was propounded by Philip Zimbardo in the year 1969. The theory was however further developed thirteen years later by George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson. In 1969, Philip Zimbardo, a psychologist from Stanford University, ran an interesting field study. He abandoned two cars in two very different places: one in a mostly poor, crime-ridden section of New York City, and the other in a fairly affluent neighbourhood of Palo Alto, Calif. Both cars were left without license plates and parked with their hoods up. After just 10 minutes, passersby in New York City began vandalizing the car. First they stripped it for parts. Then the random destruction began. Windows were smashed. The car was destroyed. But in Palo Alto, the other car remained untouched for more than a week. Finally, Zimbardo did something unusual: He took a sledgehammer and gave the California car a smash. After that, passersby quickly ripped it apart, just as they'd done in New York. This field study was a simple demonstration of how something that is clearly neglected can quickly become a target for vandals. But it eventually morphed into something far more than that. It became the basis for one of the most influential theories of crime and policing in America: "broken windows."

Thirteen years after the Zimbardo study, criminologists George L. Kelling and James Q. Wilson wrote an article for "The Atlantic". They were fascinated by what had happened to Zimbardo's abandoned cars and thought the findings could be applied on a larger scale, to entire communities. Wilson and Kelling saw serious crime as the final result of a lengthier chain of events, theorizing that crime emanated from disorder and that if disorder were eliminated, then serious crimes would not occur. Their theory further posits that the prevalence of disorder creates fear in the minds of citizens who are convinced that the area is unsafe. This withdrawal from the community weakens social controls that previously kept criminals in check. Once this process begins, it feeds itself. Disorder causes crime, and crime causes further disorder and crime.

This theory could be applied to explain police corruption in Nigeria. Police corruption started with the appeal for financial support by men of the Nigeria police force from the members of the public. This later graduated from there to outright demand for bribe, extortion and other vices in the force. Failure to check the initial corrupt tendencies from few members of the force snowballed into full-fledged routine. Corruption then became endemic and systemic in the force.

### **Methodology**

This paper adopted the mixed methods design. Awka South is one of the 21 LGAs in Anambra state. It is made up of 9 towns which are Awka, Amawbia, Nibo, Nise and Mbaukwu. Others are Umuawulu, Okpuno, Ezinato and Isiagu. Natives of Awka were known to be blacksmiths, farmers and great hunters and warriors in the olden days. Awka South has an estimated population of 189,049 according to the 2006 National Population Census. A sample size of 400 study participants was chosen by the researchers through the application of Taro Yamane's sample size determination formula. These participants were given the structured questionnaire to fill. The In Depth Interview (IDI) was used for collection of qualitative data. Six men opinion leaders from Awka Metropolis were chosen for the IDI. They were chosen purposively using the non probabilistic sampling method. The essence of this is to ensure that people with the requisite knowledge were interviewed. Collated quantitative data were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis of the study objectives was done using frequency counts and percent while the study hypotheses were tested with the chi square test statistic. The qualitative data collected through the use of IDI were transcribed and analyzed using the thematic method of content analysis.

### **Data Presentation and Analysis**

In this study, 400 questionnaires were administered to the study participants. Conversely, only 372 of the questionnaire were properly filled and returned. It follows therefore that the quantitative analysis of this paper was done with the 372 correctly filled and returned questionnaire.

Table 1: Socio Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Sex</b>		
<i>Male</i>	185	49.7
<i>Female</i>	187	50.3
<i>Total</i>	372	100.0
<b>Age</b>		
<i>21 – 30</i>	90	24.2
<i>31 – 40</i>	75	20.2
<i>41 – 50</i>	110	29.6
<i>51 – 60</i>	85	22.8
<i>61 years and above</i>	12	3.2
<i>Total</i>	372	100.0
<b>Marital Status</b>		
<i>Single</i>	101	27.2
<i>Married</i>	228	61.3
<i>Divorced</i>	32	8.6
<i>Separated</i>	7	1.9
<i>Widowed</i>	4	1.1
<i>Total</i>	372	100.0
<b>Education</b>		
<i>No formal education</i>	33	8.9
<i>FSLC</i>	52	14.0
<i>SSCE/GCE</i>	113	30.4
<i>OND/NCE</i>	91	24.5
<i>B. Sc./equivalent</i>	73	19.6
<i>M. Sc./equivalent</i>	7	1.9
<i>PhD</i>	3	.8
<i>Total</i>	372	100.0
<b>Occupation</b>		
<i>Civil servant</i>	85	22.8
<i>Trader</i>	88	23.7
<i>Driver</i>	88	23.7
<i>Student</i>	23	6.2
<i>Artisan</i>	71	19.1
<i>Unemployed</i>	17	4.6
<i>Total</i>	372	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

In Table 1, 49.7% of the respondents are males whereas 50.3% of them are females. Age distribution of the respondents has a mean age of 40.87 years, a standard error of mean of 0.625, a median age of 42.00 and 45 years as the mode. The distribution also has a standard deviation of 12.063; minimum and maximum ages of 21 and 67 years respectively. The Table also shows that 29.6% of the respondents were 41-50 years old while 3.2% of them were 61 years old and above. More than half of the respondents 61.3% were married whereas 1.1% of them were

widowed. It could be seen from the Table that nearly a third of the respondents 30.4% were holders of SSCE while less than one percent of them have PhD degree. Lastly but not the least, traders and drivers constituted nearly half of the respondents 47.4% whereas the unemployed made up 4.6% of the respondents.

Table 2: Respondents' views on the forms of police corruption in their communities

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Extortion of motorists</i>	129	34.7
<i>Illegal arrest and detention</i>	105	28.2
<i>Perverting justice after collecting bribe from suspect</i>	65	17.5
<i>Colluding with criminals</i>	27	7.3
<i>Extra judicial killing</i>	23	6.2
<i>Extorting detainees and collecting money for bail</i>	23	6.2
<i>Total</i>	372	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

Table 2 shows that the most common form of police corruption is extortion of motorists whereas extrajudicial killing, extorting detainees and collecting of money for bail were the least common form of corruption by the police. Data from the IDI supported the questionnaire data on the above issue. A 65 year old male participant in the IDI from Amaenyi averred that;

Police corruption takes many forms in this community. However, the most common form is illegal road blocks here and there where they collect money from the vehicle drivers plying those routes. They will always ask you “anything for the boys? At all at all na him pass”. When I am in the good mood I easily give them something.

Factors responsible for police corruption were interrogated and the respondents responded as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Respondents' views on the primary factor responsible for police corruption

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Greed</i>	125	33.6
<i>Weak institutional framework to monitor and punish corrupt police personnel</i>	84	22.6
<i>Inadequate disciplinary action against erring police personnel</i>	51	13.7
<i>Debased value system</i>	79	21.2
<i>Low remuneration package for police personnel</i>	33	8.9
<i>Total</i>	372	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

In Table 3, a third of the respondents 33.6% maintained that greed on the part of police personnel was responsible for police corruption whereas 13.7% of them argued that police corruption was as a result of inadequate disciplinary action against erring police personnel. Participants in the IDI did not differ significantly from their counterparts who participated in the quantitative exercise. However, a 56 year old male civil servant from Aroma who participated in the IDI said;

“Police corruption is just like the usual corruption seen among government workers. Many people indulge in corruption to make extra money because salaries are never enough”. Another participant in the IDI, a 65 year old male opinion leader from Amikwo stated that;

Many things could be blamed for corruption in the police force. One of them is leadership problem. We do not have reliable and selfless leaders. The police know that nobody will prosecute them because the leaders especially people in government are also guilty of corruption. If our leaders start leading by example, most likely, corruption will be minimized in the country.

Table 4: Respondents’ views on the implications of police corruption on crime prevention and control

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Insecurity of lives and properties</i>	143	38.4
<i>Increase in criminal activities</i>	128	34.4
<i>Weakened and ineffective police force</i>	54	14.5
<i>Discouraging potential investors from investing in the community</i>	47	12.6
<i>Total</i>	372	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

Table 4 shows that 38.4% of the respondents were of the views that insecurity of lives and properties were the major implications of police corruption while 12.6% of them stressed that the implication of police corruption will lead to discouraging potential investors from investing in the community. Most of the participants in the IDI adumbrated that police corruption leads to lack of trust on the effectiveness of the police. One of the participants in the IDI, who is a 55 year old male trader from Umudioka Awka contended that “Trusting the police for your safety is same as trusting the devil to save you”.

Table 5: Respondents’ views on how to curb police corruption

<i>Response</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
<i>Institutions responsible for graft control in the country should be strengthened and made responsive</i>	98	26.3
<i>Victims of police corruption should be heard and given justice</i>	73	19.6
<i>Value reorientation of every member of the society not just the members of the police force</i>	57	15.3
<i>Swift punishment to erring police personnel</i>	65	17.5
<i>People to be recruited into the Nigeria police should be thoroughly screened</i>	79	21.2
<i>Total</i>	372	100.0

Field Survey, 2019

Almost a quarter of the respondents in Table 5 stressed that police corruption could be curbed by making the institution responsible for graft control in the country to be strengthened and responsive in the discharge of their duties. It was also suggested by 15.3% of the respondents that police corruption could be stemmed through value reorientation of every member of the

society and not just the members of the police force. Participants for the IDI concurred with the above. However, the 65 year old male participant in the IDI from Amaenyi affirmed that; Police corruption could be stopped by penalizing the corrupt eggs among them instantly. This is possible by giving powers to people of proven integrity who will be saddled with the responsibility of going round to get the corrupt police persons and penalize them immediately without unnecessary recourse to public bureaucracy.

**Hypothesis One:** Older respondents are more likely to become victims of police corruption than their younger counterparts in Awka South LGA.

Table 6: Cross tabulation between age and being victim of police corruption

			<i>Have you ever being a victim of police corruption?</i>		<i>Total</i>
			<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	
<i>What is your age as at last birthday?</i>	<i>21 - 30</i>	<i>Count</i>	51	39	90
		<i>% of Total</i>	13.7%	10.5%	24.2%
	<i>31 - 40</i>	<i>Count</i>	51	24	75
		<i>% of Total</i>	13.7%	6.5%	20.2%
	<i>41 - 50</i>	<i>Count</i>	64	46	110
		<i>% of Total</i>	17.2%	12.4%	29.6%
	<i>51 - 60</i>	<i>Count</i>	56	29	85
		<i>% of Total</i>	15.1%	7.8%	22.8%
	<i>61+</i>	<i>Count</i>	12	0	12
		<i>% of Total</i>	3.2%	0.0%	3.2%
<i>Total</i>	<i>Count</i>	234	138	372	
	<i>% of Total</i>	62.9%	37.1%	100.0%	

$X^2(4, N=372) = 10.786 \quad P = 0.029$

Field Survey, 2019

A significant relationship was found between age and being victim of police corruption in Awka South LGA at  $P=0.029$ . This implies that older respondents are more likely to become victims of police corruption than their younger counterparts in Awka South LGA.

**Hypothesis Two:** Drivers and traders are more likely to rate police corruption higher than other occupational groups in Awka South LGA.

Table 7: Cross tabulation between occupation and rating of police corruption

			<i>How would you rate police corruption in your community</i>				<i>Total</i>
			<i>Very high</i>	<i>Moderately high</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Very low</i>	
<i>What is your occupation?</i>	<i>Civil servant</i>	<i>Count</i>	7	39	38	1	85
		<i>% of Total</i>	1.9%	10.5%	10.2%	0.3%	22.8%
	<i>Trader</i>	<i>Count</i>	50	31	5	2	88
		<i>% of Total</i>	13.4%	8.3%	1.3%	0.5%	23.7%
	<i>Driver</i>	<i>Count</i>	38	36	10	4	88
		<i>% of Total</i>	10.2%	9.7%	2.7%	1.1%	23.7%
	<i>Student</i>	<i>Count</i>	21	0	0	2	23
		<i>% of Total</i>	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.5%	6.2%
	<i>Artisan</i>	<i>Count</i>	29	40	0	2	71
		<i>% of Total</i>	7.8%	10.8%	0.0%	0.5%	19.1%
<i>Unemployed</i>	<i>Count</i>	0	14	3	0	17	
	<i>% of Total</i>	0.0%	3.8%	0.8%	0.0%	4.6%	
<i>Total</i>	<i>Count</i>	145	160	56	11	372	
	<i>% of Total</i>	39.0%	43.0%	15.1%	3.0%	100.0%	

$$\chi^2 (15, N=372) = 146.149 \quad P = 0.000$$

Field Survey, 2019

This paper found significant relationship between occupation and rating of police corruption in Awka South LGA at  $P=0.000$ . This shows that drivers and traders are more likely to rate police corruption higher than other occupational groups in Awka South LGA. This is expected because the two occupational groups were among the ones having more contacts with the police in the course of their daily activities.

### Discussion of the Findings

It was found in this paper that extortion of motorists, illegal arrest and detention and perverting of justice after collecting bribe from the suspect were the major forms of police corruption in Awka South LGA. This finding is consistent with Akpunonu-Ogu (2014) who had earlier stated that bribery and extortion by the police on traffic duty is the most common and unbearable form of corruption in the force. Several factors were found to be responsible for the persistence of police corruption in Awka South LGA. Principal among them is greed. Police corruption is exacerbated by the desire to acquire wealth and riches illegitimately. This is propelled according to the finding of this paper by weak institutional framework to monitor and punish corrupt police personnel. The near absence or lack of any mechanism for checking the excesses of members of the force is a readymade catalyst and incentive for engaging in corrupt conducts. Our value system is also a major factor which makes involvement in graft taking a normalcy. When members of the society glorify affluence without questioning its source, then this portends an ominous disaster for honesty, diligence and hard work. Furthermore, when a conduct is not properly reinforced negatively, the tendency of its reoccurrence is almost certain. In line with the

theoretical thrust of the paper, when a window is broken and nothing is done to repair it, subsequent allied destruction will follow suit. Police corruption is therefore a product of several ills in the society which must be stemmed.

This paper found that insecurity of lives and properties and increase in criminal activities were the major implications of police corruption in Awka south LGA. The bye product of this malaise is that the society is left with a weakened police force which is incapable of protecting members of the society. This may lead to dissuading potential investors from investing in the crime infested location. *Alemika (1999) argues that if the police which are employed to prevent and detect corruption, and bring culprits to judgment are themselves stinkingly corrupt, the society's crusade against corruption is guaranteed to fail.* The police only appear to be effective when they protect the wealthy individuals in the society. This agrees with Brogden (1982:203) who maintained that "Police forces are structured organizationally and ideologically, to act against the marginal strata of the society". The function of the police according to Alemika (1993b) embodies ironies. He continues that the police are instrument of oppression and exploitation in totalitarian and unjust social systems, yet they are essential to the preservation of justice and democracy.

This paper found that police corruption could be stemmed if institutions responsible for graft control are strengthened and made responsive in Awka south LGA. This could be by strengthening the Inspector General of Police's special taskforce with additional powers to prosecute and punish instantly erring police personnel in the country. The paper also found that people with questionable credentials should not be recruited into the force and that victims of police corruption should be heard and given justice in Awka south LGA. Swift punishment to erring police personnel and value reorientation were found to be part of ways of curbing corruption in the force. It was found in this paper that older persons were more likely to become victims of police corruption than their younger counterparts in Awka South LGA. This could be as a result of the fact that older people are more likely to be meaningfully engaged than their younger counterparts and may therefore be willing to play alongside the corrupt police personnel. Lastly but not the least, drivers and traders were found to be more likely to rate police corruption higher than other occupational groups in Awka South LGA. This is the expected owing largely to the fact that they are among the categories of people who interact with the police almost on daily basis and are left at the vagaries of police impunity.

### **Conclusion**

It is no longer news to say that corruption is endemic in Nigeria. The origin of corruption in Nigeria could be traced to the colonial era and this subsisted in the post colonial Nigerian society. Police corruption is not only a problem in itself but has threatened several anti corruption campaigns in the country. The police are the law enforcement agents of the country. When they are corrupt, then the law will be lopsidedly enforced. It is against this background that this paper sought to address the problem with a view to proffering lasting solutions to it. Extortion was found to be the most common form of corruption in the police force. More often than not, people were forced to part with their meagre earnings by the police against their wishes. This conduct was found to be as a result of greed from the police personnel. The efficiency and the effectiveness of the police were hampered by their corrupt proclivity. It becomes necessary that this does not go unmitigated. It could be argued that a corrupt free police will invariably

produce a corrupt free society. This appears utopian. It is really a daunting task which must be undertaken.

### **Recommendations**

People should always do the right thing most often. The police will always want to extort people who failed in one way or the other. It is also necessary to refuse to be coerced into giving money to the police in the guise of “anything for the boys”. Government pays the police for the services they render; nobody should be forced to give his meagre earning to the police unless the person wishes to do so. Victims of police corruption should be heard and given justice. This could be by establishing a special commission to handle complaints on police corruption. Anti graft institutions should be strengthened and made responsive and proactive. This could be by assigning special powers to the institutions saddled with the responsibility of fighting graft in the country. Value reorientation or attitudinal change is very necessary in this regards. The values for honesty and hard work should be encouraged and rewarded. Questionable sources of income and propensity for primitive acquisition of wealth should be frowned at and condemned. Finally, erring police personnel should be punished swiftly, severely and publicly. This is because justice delayed is justice denied.

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