

Corruption in the Nigeria Police Force: A Response to a Hostile State

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Abstract

Over the years, Nigerians have been confronted with police brutality and highhandedness. It is becoming a common happenstance to witness extra-judicial killings, disappearance of suspects and detainees from custody, rebellions and revolts among the rank and file, and of course, the usual giving and taking of bribes in all the nooks and crannies of the country wherever a policeman is sighted either at the police stations, checkpoints or public offices. Very few researchers have taken due care to examine the root causes of police malfeasances. A closer look at the state and condition of service of an average Nigerian police officer will reveal that he is working and operating under the most inhumane and vicious circumstance. The implication of this is that he becomes frustrated, disillusioned, resigns to fate and takes his destiny in his own hands. In his daily conducts, he manifests acts of corruption, lawlessness, violent and aggressive behaviours to the State. Qualitative method of data collection was adopted in this study. Data for the study was generated from secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, the internet, etc., while frustration-aggression theory was deployed as the theoretical framework for the study. This research revealed that corruption and other unethical attitudes exhibited by the Nigerian Police Force are a response to the hostile milieu in which they are subjected to. The paper, therefore, recommends that the welfare of the police officers must be prioritized.

Keywords: civil society, frustration-aggression, hostile state, human rights abuse, Police corruption.

Abstrak

Selama bertahun-tahun, orang-orang Nigeria telah dihadapkan dengan kebrutalan dan kekejaman polisi. Sudah menjadi kejadian umum untuk menyaksikan pembunuhan di luar proses hukum, penghilangan tersangka dan tahanan dari tahanan, pemberontakan dan pemberontakan di antara pangkat dan arsip, dan tentu saja, pemberian dan penerimaan suap yang biasa di semua sudut dan celah negara. dimanapun seorang polisi terlihat baik di kantor polisi, pos pemeriksaan atau kantor publik. Sangat sedikit peneliti yang berhati-hati untuk memeriksa akar penyebab penyimpangan polisi. Melihat lebih dekat pada keadaan dan kondisi pelayanan seorang perwira polisi Nigeria rata-rata akan mengungkapkan bahwa dia bekerja dan beroperasi di bawah keadaan yang paling tidak manusiawi dan kejam. Implikasinya adalah ia menjadi frustrasi, kecewa, pasrah pada nasib dan mengambil nasibnya sendiri. Dalam kesehariannya, ia memmanifestasikan tindakan korupsi, pelanggaran hukum, perilaku kekerasan dan agresif terhadap negara. Metode pengumpulan data kualitatif diadopsi dalam penelitian ini. Data untuk penelitian ini dihasilkan dari sumber sekunder seperti buku teks, jurnal, surat kabar, internet, dll., sedangkan teori agresi frustrasi digunakan sebagai kerangka teoretis untuk penelitian ini. Penelitian ini mengungkapkan bahwa korupsi dan sikap tidak etis lainnya yang ditunjukkan oleh Kepolisian Nigeria merupakan respons terhadap lingkungan yang tidak bersahabat di mana mereka menjadi sasaran. Oleh karena itu, makalah ini merekomendasikan bahwa kesejahteraan petugas polisi harus diprioritaskan.

Kata kunci: masyarakat sipil, frustrasi-agresi, negara bermusuhan, pelanggaran hak asasi manusia, korupsi polisi.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, Nigerians have been confronted with the stark reality of police brutality and flagrant abuse of the fundamental human rights of the citizens. It is gradually becoming conventional that the

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police, whose primary responsibility is to protect lives and property of the common citizens, have turned around to hunt, maim and kill the very people entrusted under their care. In fact, when the ordinary people recount their odious and harrowing encounters with the Nigerian police, one is bound to come to a conclusion that the Nigerian police have become a terror group of sorts. Today, it is possible for citizens to be hounded into police detention on trumped up allegations and kept incommunicado for days and weeks without being pressed with any valid charges or presented to any court of competent jurisdiction for trial. Most observers are bewildered as to the egregious level of police hostility to the Nigerian populace (Shineyoureye: 2019).

These hostilities manifest in varying dimensions ranging from mounting of unauthorized check points, roadblocks and toll gates to extort money from road users, eliciting payments before and during investigation of cases reported to them, taking bribes for bail, active connivance with criminal elements to commit heinous offences, stuffing and snatching of ballot boxes, misrepresentation of illiterate complainants, brazenly display of indiscipline in form of rejection of lawful posting, soliciting for sex and raping of female detainees. These irregularities among the officers and men of the Nigerian Police Force have in no small measure, affected the psych and perception of the citizens. The poor image which the police have carved for themselves have prompted researchers to ask questions as to the causes of police brutality, hostility, viciousness and cruelty.

Some analysts and scholars have come up with the thesis of deep rooted corruption in the Nigerian public service. To them, the police, being an integral part of the wider society, also share their own portion of corruption that is prevalent in the wider society (Transparency International, 2010; Oloya, 2015; Onukaba, 2017; Ibekwe, Udo and Olawoyin, 2017; Kolawole, Kumolu, Akinrefon and Oke, 2017; UNODC, 2019). Although all the above studies have highlighted police corruption and corrupt practices, none of them looked at the debilitating circumstances and milieu under which the police operate. One of the major gaps that this extant work intends to fill is to examine the institutional and psychological factors that lure the police into public corruption and crass brutality of the ordinary citizens.

RESEARCH METHOD

Qualitative data collection methods were adopted in this study. The data for this study were generated from secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, internet, etc., while the theory of frustration aggression was used as the theoretical framework for this study. Research Seeks to uncover the causes of corruption and other unethical attitudes exhibited by the Nigerian Police

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Evolution of the Nigeria Police

The origin of the Nigeria Police according to Okoli (2015) is traceable to 1820 with officers from Eastern Nigeria, particularly today's Imo State. In 1879, an armed paramilitary Hausa Constabulary comprising 1,200 members was established and this was followed by the constitution of the Niger Coast Constabulary in Calabar in 1894. The Lagos Police was established in 1896. Up North, the Royal Niger Company Constabulary was set up by the Royal Niger Company in 1888. On the proclamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in the early 1900s, part of the Niger Coast Constabulary constituted the Southern Company Constabulary while the Northern Nigeria Police was partly consisted of the Royal Niger Company Constabulary. As the colonial masters gained foothold on Nigeria, the police became more

associated with native authorities or local governments. However, in the First Republic, the various police formations fell under the control of their respective regions and later nationalized as it is today.

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) performs conventional police duties in addition to the maintenance of internal security. The NPF is under the headship and control of an Inspector General of Police (IGP) appointed by the President to maintain law and order in the country. He is assisted by a few Deputy Inspectors General (DIG) in charge of operations, criminal investigations, logistics, training, etc. States are grouped under zonal commands with each zone under the headship of an Assistant Inspector General of Police (AIG). There are 37 state commands corresponding with the 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory of Abuja and each is controlled by a Commissioner of Police (CP). Each state has area commands. An area command is under the control of an Area commander. Below the area commands are the police divisions and a division is headed by a Divisional Police Officer (DPO). There is at least a police division in each local government area of the country. The number of divisions in each local government area depends on the size, population and crime rate. There are police posts under the supervision of the DPOs.

There is a police mobile force (MOPOL), which is a strike unit to counter incidents of civil unrest. Placed under the control of the Inspector General of Police, it takes over operations of major crisis where conventional police cannot cope. There are a few MOPOL Commands and over 50 Police Mobile Squadrons with at least a squadron in each state and Abuja.

It is important to note here that the state governors, who the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, has designated as the Chief Security Officers of their respective states, have no direct or remote control over the Commissioners of Police serving in their respective states. The implication of this is that the Nigerian Police Force is highly centralized as authority and command flow from the IGP who is in faraway Abuja. In case of any security threat which requires prompt and immediate response, the Governor of the affected state cannot dish out instructions or mobilise police command in his jurisdiction. The Police Commissioner must first of all, get clearance from his boss in Abuja and his boss will in turn respond according to the body language of the President before taking action.

The Concept of Corruption

Corruption is a long-standing topic of sociological reflection and countless researches have demonstrated the extent to which the concept continues to be a central issue in Africa and other Third World countries where corruption is endemic. The importance of the concept in our daily lives and in the social sciences has led to various scholars defining it. Etymologically, the concept of corruption is derived from the Latin word "corruptus" which implies to break away or destroy. Thus, literally, corruption means to break away or depart from morality, ethics and civil virtues. The World Bank defines corruption as the abuse of office for private gains. Public office is abused for private gain when an official extorts, solicits or accepts bribes. It is also an abuse when private agents actively offer bribes to circumvent public policies and processes for competitive advantage and profit. Public offices can also be abused for personal benefit even without bribery, through patronage, favoritism and nepotism, embezzlement or the diversion of state resources (World Bank: 1997).

Section 2 of the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission Act (2000) defines corruption to include bribery, fraud, and other related offences. By this definition, emphasis is placed bribery. However, the above definitions are narrow and tend to neglect other forms of corruption such as abuse of power, diversion of funds, demand for ransom, culpable negligence, disobedience to constituted authority and lawful posting, torture, extortion, human rights abuse, embezzlement, contract

inflation, kickbacks, falsification of records, pervasion of justice, sexual exploitation, drug trafficking, money laundering, nepotism, etc.

Hornby (2010) in his definition, says corruption is dishonesty. This means fraudulence, lack of integrity, insincerity, etc. It is without doubt that corrupt activities abound in many facets and particularly in public institutions such as the Nigeria Police Force whose duties are the maintenance of law and order. Their involvement in corruption violates the laws they are meant to maintain.

Theoretical Framework

In a search for a more suitable analytical tool for this study, *frustration-aggression theory* is considered. According to Rourke (1997), theories that focus on the common psychological traits of humankind also help explain socio-political behaviours. Frustration-aggression theory was developed in 1939 by John Dollard and later expanded and made popular by Berkowitz and Yates (1962). In an attempt to rationalize the corrupt tendencies among the rank and file of the Nigerian Police Force, frustration-aggression theory is adopted. The theory contends that frustrated individuals, societies or groups sometimes become collectively aggressive. In other words, the cardinal argument of this theory is that aggression is a result of frustration and frustration arises when legitimate desires of an individual or group is denied. The resultant effect of such denial leads to frustration and frustration would in turn make the individual or group of individuals to react aggressively towards those they believe denied them their due benefits. It is possible to argue, for example, that mass frustration promoted the rise of Adolf Hitler and German aggression in World War I. Consequently, the perceived neglect, lack of required modern tools of policing, poor welfare package and in some cases, outright denial of certain legitimate entitlements have contrived to frustrate the Nigerian Police Force and thereby, make the Force to manifest degrees of aggressions and violent conducts to the citizens.

In the opinion of Dode and Egugbo (2017), frustration-aggression theory failed to posit and portray the danger in the use of violence or corrupt practices as a response to or in bringing about solution to any genuine grievance or unfavourable condition. Violence and corruption are known to be dangerous and destructive phenomena. For instance, when police officers resort to extra-judicial killings, torture, taking of bribes, extortion and other unethical activities, the society will be drastically and adversely affected in one way or the other. It is always imperative to approach any genuine agitation and displeasure using non-violent means.

Forms of Corruption in the Nigeria Police Force

The Human Right Watch (2010) carried out a research based on interviews with about 145 victims of, and witnesses to, police corruption in Nigeria. Among the respondents were traders, sex workers, commercial drivers, students, criminal suspects and victims of common crimes. Others were rank and file and senior police officers, federal government officials, lawyers, judges, prosecutors, diplomats, religious and civil society leaders and armed vigilante group members. Among the findings were the following forms of corruption in the Nigeria Police Force.

Returns: This is a form of corruption within the Nigeria police in which the rank and file officers are compelled to pay up the chain of command a share of the money they extort from the public. As it happens, the higher the returns made to one's bosses in the office, the longer one is retained in a lucrative bit. A financially loyal officer would even be redeployed to a much more lucrative bit.

Payment for Investigation: This is the practice of forcing crime victims to pay the police to carry out an investigation. Some of these payments include stationeries, transportation, lunch and bribe for the

investigating police officer (IPO) to prevent him from shifting his loyalty to the crime suspect. Those with no means to pay are often left without justice while criminal suspect with good financial background can offer bribe to the police to drop a case, influence the outcome of an investigation, or even turn the case against the victim. In this situation, justice is for sale to the highest bidder.

Road Blocks as Toll Gates: It is public knowledge in Nigeria that the Nigeria police have converted road blocks or check points to toll gates where they extort money from motorists and cyclists. Commercial vehicle drivers are most hit as they have to part with a minimum of N100 Naira even when the driver's licence, vehicle particulars and other requirements are without blemish. Private motorists pay more for any deficiency in their particulars. Police extortion of commercial motorists blind them from thoroughly checking their luggage. Moreover, luxury vehicles are hardly checked for fear of the occupant being a powerful politician or VIP.

Illegal Check Points: Very often, police mount illegal road blocks especially on market days of the host and surrounding communities for the sole purpose of extorting money from commercial motorists, cyclists, and traders because of their wares being conveyed to the market. In some instances, such illegal check points are in multiples within the range of a few kilometers and others have a distance between them at less than a kilometer.

Arbitrary Arrest and Detention: A summary of interviews conducted by Human Rights Watch in 2008 with numerous police officers, legal professionals, and civil society leaders characterized the problem of unlawful detention of citizens by Nigerian police officers with the apparent motivation to extort money as a widespread and growing problem throughout Nigeria. They described how the police use specific incidents of crime, and the high levels of crime in general, as a pretext to randomly arrest and detain individuals and groups of citizens. Once a person is arrested by the police and refuses, or is unable, to pay the money demanded, they are often detained until they negotiate an amount for their release. In many cases, this unlawful detention may last for days or even weeks. Those who do not pay face threats, beatings, sexual assault, torture, or even death. Extended periods of detention leave victims and their friends and family vulnerable to repeated threats and demands for bribes. Ostensibly, this illegal act of rights violation led to the famous and widespread ENDSARS protests across the major cities in Nigeria in October 2020.

Bribe for Bail: In most police stations in Nigeria, it is boldly written, "Bail is free", but in reality, there is hardly any bail that is undertaken without parting with money to the police. The amount of bribe collected for bail depends on the nature of the alleged crime involved, the number of police officers involved in the case, the rank of the officers involved, and the financial background of the crime suspect.

Turning a Case against the Victim: The police often connive with crime suspects from wealthy families against crime victims after collecting huge sums of money from them. As crime investigators, the police often turn the case against the victim, release the crime suspect on bail without the victim's knowledge and even threaten him of a criminal case against him. He is intimidated from pursuing the case. In other situations, the victim is forced to accept financial settlement from the crime suspect.

Misrepresenting Illiterate Complainants: Very often, complainants who cannot read or write are misrepresented by the police when writing their statements. They do not put down exactly what the complainant has said. They often deliberately water down the statement after receiving bribe from the crime suspect. Such a loose case would not warrant going to the court. Even if they go, the suspect would certainly be set free.

Detention without Prosecution: In some situations, high profile criminal suspects are paraded on television with a promise to prosecute them soon. Eventually, court actions are never taken and the

suspects are detained for some months before they are set free after collecting huge sums of money from the suspects' families. Whereas the suspects would have earned life jail if they were prosecuted.

Embezzlement of Funds: Most hierarchies in the Nigeria Police Force are involved in the embezzlement and misappropriation of the funds meant to improve the welfare of the personnel in the force. There is hardly any Inspector General of Police, IGP, whose reign did not witness one figment of corruption scandal or the other. Very often, the funds meant for deployment and transfer allowance, vehicle maintenance and fueling, rehabilitation of barracks, imprest, etc., find their way to private pockets. No wonder billions of naira worth of shares in blue chip companies in Nigeria, including Nigeria Breweries Plc, were traced to an incumbent Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun during the Olusegun Obasanjo's Presidency. He was humiliated out of the force by dismissal.

Collaboration with Election Riggers: For the love of money, members of the Nigeria Police Force have been clandestinely and directly involved in the rigging of elections in Nigeria. They find it convenient to escort ballot boxes and other voting materials to private homes or hide-outs to tomb-print in favour of the donor candidate or political party. Even in the polling station, they supervise the rigging of elections and intimidate and threaten opposition party agents and supporters.

Contract Inflation: The top hierarchy of the Nigeria Police at the national, zonal and state levels often connive with contractors and suppliers to build their financial interests in the contract price, thus skyrocketing the contract value. Because of their benefits, such contracts are not thoroughly supervised which result to poor job execution and project failure.

Conniving With Drug Barons: Some police officers connive with hard drug pushers and plot easy passage for them to their destination in exchange for huge sums of money. In some of such situations, they are partners in the business of cannabis. Among Nigerians, the opinion is high that the police know the cultivators, peddlers and end-users of banned substances like cannabis, marijuana, etc., but will most likely not go after them for fear of losing a veritable sources of lucrative business.

Receiving Bribe for Banned Goods: The police collect bribes from carriers and conveyors of banned goods rather than impounding and prosecuting such criminals. By so doing, they worsen the economic situation of Nigeria. Again, some of these contraband goods are of low standards and could be harmful to the health of the users and consumers. This could be the reason for the sharp increase in Nigeria of the incidences of cancer, heart failure, and gastrointestinal related diseases.

Connivance with Criminal Elements, Armed Robbers and Kidnappers: In Nigeria, not a few police men have been arrested for either conniving with or supplying armed robbers and kidnappers arms and ammunition or both for financial gratifications. Some others have been directly involved by going for armed robbery or kidnapping. Former President Olusegun Obasanjo while declaring that police men often hire their guns to criminals to carry out assassination, armed robbery, and covering criminals for returns, condemned the practice as morally reprehensible. Moreover, he condemned members of the Nigeria police for the killing of the Apo six in Abuja (Okonkwo, 2003).

Raping of Female Detainees: Female criminal suspects detained in the police cells are often humiliated, intimidated and cowed to sexual submission by the police. In some situations, they promise to set such female suspects free on the condition of sleeping with them. Frustrated and fearing impending imprisonment, they submit to such sexual demand. A commercial sex worker in Lagos who was unable to pay the demanded sum described her ordeal in an interview with Human Rights Watch and lamented that she bribed her way out of police detention with sex in the police man's office. The randy police officer did not even use a condom during the act.

Illegal Postings of Police Officers to Unofficial but Powerful Persons and Companies. It is a common sight in Nigeria to see police and other security officers posted to residences of powerful individuals and politicians and multinational companies to provide cover. However, in a country with a poor police-to-citizen ratio of 1 to 600 as against the UN recommended standard, security goes for the highest bidder while shoddy policing for the many. It invariably amounts to corruption when the available personnel are bought over for costly private protection for the few. The arrangements, provide opportunities for corruption. In the oil company payments for the police officers, no receipts are given and prices also appear to vary somewhat between companies and contracts. Moreover, the funds generally do not go into the public coffers but instead to individual high-ranking officers and to officials assigned to work with the private security companies. It is estimated that acquiring the “initial permission from the inspector general to utilize MOPOL officers” costs the equivalent of \$800. Then the equivalent of \$335 goes to each unit and station commander. Another \$13 is allocated for each MOPOL officer per 12-hour shift, paid to the unit commander, plus a \$2 supplement for food, (Kimani: 2009).

Causes of Corruption in the Nigeria Police Force

Numerous factors account for the endemic corruption in the Nigeria Police Force, some of which are discussed below:

Poor Salary: The dismal remunerations of the Nigeria Police is one of the major causes of corruption in the force. For instance, going by the newly approved salary structure, Nigerian Police constable earns between 84,000 and 86,000 naira. A sergeant earns about 96,000 to 119,000 naira net while an inspector goes home with between 167,000 to 254,000 naira. The net income of an Assistant Superintendent of Police (ASP) ranges from 271,000 to 296,000 naira. When juxtaposed with what their counterparts in the USA, Britain, Ghana and South Africa earn, police salary in Nigeria is nothing to write home about. In the United States Police Department as at 2012, the starting point for officers was 45,929 dollars per annum. Los Angeles Police Department starting point for new police officers was 46,583 dollars yearly. First degree and higher degree holders earn about 50,342 dollars. Ghana recently increased the minimum wages of an average police officer by 16.7 percent from 6 Ghana Cedis (GHC) daily. In South Africa, an average police officer earns 142,900 Rands yearly. In Britain, the rate of wages depends on the force one belongs. But generally, the starting point is about 23,000 pounds. When one considers the level at which the naira has fallen and the current inflation, the plight of the Nigeria police is better imagined. The worst hit are the rank and files who spend decades in the line of duty but are hardly promoted or accommodated. Poverty reigns in the Nigeria police and this is a direct invitation to be corrupt (Oditia, 28th July, 2015).

Poor Welfare: In the midst of the poor salary, the only things they do not buy are perhaps, guns and bullets. Even the guns in most cases are tied to their shoulders with whatever ropes they can get. They buy the materials for their uniforms and sew them with their personal money. They buy shoes as part of their uniform, call-cards to make calls in the process of handling cases, and petrol to fuel their vehicles. They pay transport fares to effect arrest and in the course of investigating cases. They buy torches, biros and stationeries needed for their work. Moreover, the environment in the police barracks are more suitable for pigs than for human beings. They lack adequate insurance cover to assure them that their families will not suffer in case of death in active service. Given the above plight of the Nigeria police, it is therefore, inconceivable, illusionary and even foolish to expect that they will not be corrupt or to expect that they would be ready to die in defence of the public (Onwuka, August 9, 2011). Sometimes, some police

officers, out of compassion, go out of their ways to pay the medical bills of detainees who are indisposed while in custody without reimbursement.

Uncertain Future: A former Inspector General of Police (IGP), Solomon Arase, has identified the fear of the unknown as one of the major causes of corruption and unprofessional conduct in the Nigerian Police Force. According to him, when you retire at 60 years of age or having served for 35 years, you do not know where you are retiring to. Taking a decision on what to do on retirement is risky. A faulty decision, especially of a business venture, can make one lose the entire gratuity, even as meager as it is. This uncertain future makes police men to use every opportunity that comes their way to grab as much money as possible (Isiguzo, June 9, 2016). Again, if a police man dies in the line of his duty, his surviving family members and dependents face a life of uncertainty. The police high command will evict them from their residence in the barracks so as to make way for the accommodation of another officer and his family. This is done without due consideration of the welfare of family of the deceased officer. Worse still, the next-of-kin to the dead officer will pass through harrowing and arduous processes to claim the death benefits and other entitlements of the departed policeman.

Weak Institutions in Nigeria: The Nigeria Police, as other public institutions, is very weak. Rather than having strong men administering public institutions, what Nigeria needs are strong institutions that are not only superior to the people heading them, but they should also have efficient and effective mechanisms for internal self-control and regulation. This is confirmed in an opinion poll carried out by researchers in NOIPOLs agency which shows that the Nigeria Police Force, along with the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) are the most corrupt institutions in Nigeria. Nearly 25 percent of the poll participants blame weakness of public institutions as the main cause of police corruption in Nigeria (Ojude, 20th October, 2015).

Inherently Corrupt System: Corruption seems to have been ingrained in Nigeria. It is a practice that has been elevated to a culture. This makes the average Nigerian to be inherently corrupt. Members of the Nigerian Police Force are not angels but Nigerians who were nurtured in the corrupt Nigerian environment. Having been infected by the bug of corruption through such polluted environment, the Nigerian police cannot afford to behave differently. They are products of the corrupt society. Confirming this statement, the Nigerian Corruption Survey carried out by the National Bureau of statistics has revealed that only 5.3 percent of Nigerians will either refuse to pay bribe when asked to or refuse to accept when a bribe is offered (Ibekwe, Udo & Olawoyin 2017). Like the Nigerian society, corruption pervades the atmosphere in the Nigerian Police Force, it is like cesspit; it smells everywhere around the police. In other words, corruption is a culture within the force. In such a situation, the few decent ones become the odd men and are easily isolated. They are even denied occupying sensitive positions because they would not play ball nor extort money from the public to make financial returns to their bosses. Moreover, the financial returns to the bosses may even be a determining factor in recommending one for promotion. Not a few incorruptible officers are stagnated due to their honest attitude. In fact, honesty and integrity have become offences in the Nigeria Police Force and officers and men are punished by isolation, stagnation, remote postings, etc. Frustrated, most of such incorruptible ones later join the bandwagon of corruption. As the saying goes, if you cannot beat them, you join them.

The Integrity of those who join the Nigeria Police Force: In most cases, those who join the rank and file and the officer cadre of the Nigeria Police Force are people of questionable character such as thieves, fraudsters, rapists, examination cheats, kidnappers, vandals, fighters, etc. These are the rejects of the society who have been thorns in the flesh of their parents, families and even communities. To reduce or avoid the pain and public disgrace such bad eggs cause their families, they are often advised to join the

police force where they would be forced to behave well through discipline. However, for such bad boys, they accept to join the police because it is a place where corruption and all forms of indiscipline reign. And being armed and given official uniforms, they are now emboldened to practice their acts with impunity.

Poor Recruitment Procedure: With men and women of questionable character daily applying to join the police force, the Nigeria Police Force and indeed Nigeria as a country lack computerized central data bases where the activities of people, including criminal records, are stored. This makes the police force to rely only on the information provided by the applicants, traditional rulers and their referees in which characters are polished or even forged. In terms of academic qualifications, not a few people join the Nigeria Police and the military with fake certificates. This poor recruitment procedure gives room for every Tom, Dick and Harry to join the police. Any organization that does not discriminate between the good, the bad and the ugly in its recruitment procedure cannot be enviable.

Inadequate Discipline and Training: As dishonest people troop to join the police, so they also do to join the military. But the discipline and regimentation in the military is so much that the bad eggs are forced to behave as the punishment for indiscipline is unbearable. For the Nigeria Police Force, the topmost hierarchy officers down to the least rank and file officers are characterized by gross indiscipline such as lack of respect for superior officers by the junior ones, extortion, bribery, embezzlement, rape of female detainees, misrepresentation of statements of illiterate people, conniving with armed robbers and kidnapers etc. In most cases, policemen alleged to have committed one crime or the other are covered up. Where there is punishment, it may just be a slap on the wrist. Where an officer is indicted for corruption or indiscipline, he bribes his way through to ensure the report is cancelled or watered down.

The Effects of Corruption in the Nigeria Police Force

The consequences of corruption in the Nigeria Police Force are many and a few are discussed below:

The Nigerian Police Force as a Source or Cause of Corruption in Nigerian Society:

When a law enforcement agency and a corruption fighter such as the Nigeria Police Force becomes corrupt and indiscipline and even more so than the society they are meant to sanitize, they become a source and a cause of corruption. The police are supposed to be models for men and women of the Nigerian society to be emulated. Their involvement in corruption is a killer to honesty, sincerity, integrity and discipline. It demoralizes people of good character which makes them fall prey to the corruption bug. If those who are meant to enforce the law are breaking it with reckless abandon, who are the ordinary people not to follow suit? By being corrupt, the Nigeria Police are helping to spread corruption in Nigeria.

Promotion of Indiscipline in the Nigeria Police:

The massive corruption in the Nigeria Police Force is a major reason for the reign of indiscipline in the force. Policemen indicted for having committed an offence or broken the rules are hardly punished. Even when they are sanctioned, the punishment may not be commensurate with the weight of the offence committed. Such policemen found wanting almost always succeed in bribing their way through so that little or no punishment is given to them. The implication is the promotion of gross indiscipline such as insubordination, extortion, bribery, mounting of illegal check points, conniving with armed robbers and kidnapers, etc. This is because they can always buy their way to obtain freedom when found wanting. Moreover, the regular financial returns made to superior officers often make such officers to look the other way when the junior ones commit an offence.

Pervasion of Justice: Corruption in the police often makes them to turn a case against the victim. Having obtained huge sum of money from a party to a dispute, they either misrepresent the other party in writing his statement (if he is illiterate), or threaten him to settle out of court by accepting money as compensation. Moreover, they often deliberately tilt the case against the victim when giving their own account in the law court. For the police, it is not even out of place to make the victim the offender and vice-versa through falsehood. Not a few innocent people or victims have been jailed or suffered detention without trial due to police corruption.

Pervasion of Voters' Will: By conniving to rig elections, the will of the electorate is being perverted. There are several instances where the members of the Nigerian Police Force have been implicated in snatching ballot boxes. Also, the police in Nigeria have been caught aiding hoodlums and political thugs in thump printing ballot papers, carting away sensitive electoral materials, rewriting electoral results. All the above electoral frauds are perpetrated with a mindset of aiding their principals and political paymasters to rig elections; thereby, perverting the legitimate will of the voters for some pecuniary gratifications. The announcement by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) of unpopular and relatively unknown candidates as winners of elections in Nigeria is common place. Such announcements have often been followed by protests and riots, resulting to arson, destruction and killings.

Abuse of Fundamental Human Rights: The massive corruption in the Nigeria Police Force makes them to be used by privileged people to settle scores with their enemies. In Nigeria, the police often refuse bail for some offences that are obviously bail-able. In other situations, the investigating police officer (IPO) deliberately avoids the detainee's family members so that he would spend longer period in detention. Some of such people are detained for weeks, months or even years without trial. This is abuse of fundamental human rights. The police commit such atrocities when they have collected a huge sum of money from the financially privileged interested party. Moreover, not a few motorists have had their lives snuffed out because of their refusal to part with 100 naira at their "toll gates" otherwise called check points. Right to life is the most valuable of all rights and the Nigeria police daily deny this right to some Nigerians due to corruption. In some cases, having killed an innocent person because of their financial greed, they brand such a victim an armed robber by placing some arms and ammunition beside the corpse.

Promotion of Criminality in the Society: Corruption in the Nigeria police tends to engender acts of criminality among Nigerians. This is because bribery and extortion from the public not only make the police to condone acts of criminality, some policemen are involved in criminal acts and these encourage the people to emulate them. For some Nigerians, if the police that are meant to maintain, enforce and preserve the law are the ones not only aiding and abetting but also directly breaking it, then let us all get involved in making Nigeria a den of criminals. It is public knowledge in Nigeria that with money, one can almost always get off the hook of the police despite of the gravity of the offence committed. This assurance of setting criminals free or at most a slap in the wrist as punishment encourages criminality in Nigeria.

Prevents the Public from Volunteering Information to the Police: The greed of policemen for money often makes some of them to disclose to the suspected criminals, their sources of information which led to their arrest. On their eventual release, some of such criminals would send people to rob, attack, kidnap or even kill such informants. For this reason, most members of the public have vowed not to give information to the police. Lack of information causes setbacks to police investigation and retards the wheels of justice.

Does the Nigerian Hostile Society Stimulate Corruption in the Nigeria Police Force?

To answer above question, one has to consider the environment or milieu of policing in Nigeria. To every observer, the Nigerian Police is dubious, corrupt and laced with malfeasances. In fact, most citizens are far withdrawn from the agents of State security services. There is hardly any citizen that does not have one sour experience of the police. And indeed, the police have been caught napping not in a few occasions. For instance, there are cases where the police have been implicated with flagrant abuses of human rights, extra-judicial killings, illegal detentions of citizens, mounting of unlawful roadblocks with the intention of extorting of motorists and passers-by, rejection of lawful postings and insubordination to superior authority, raping of female detainees, turning cases against the complainant, snatching of ballot boxes, taking bribes before granting bails even when it is conspicuously displayed in their stations and offices that 'bail is free', etc.

The situation becomes more worrisome when put side-by-side by other police authorities in other climes. It is true that there is a form of corruption in all police formations around the globe, as corruption is an inherent innate trait that is found in all human race. It is also right to claim that no country, society, region or continent has monopoly of it. However, it is truer that its manifestation is more visible and pronounced in some regions or countries than others. That brings us to the issue of what causes corruption to be more or less endemic in some societies or institutions than others. To a large extent, it has been seen that deliberate institutional frameworks and policies can exacerbate, accentuate or ameliorate corruption and its practices. In other words, any society that respects and treats its police force with dignity and appreciation, will reap the reward of a decent and disciplined Force. Conversely, a society that handles her police with levity, ignominy and pays less attention to her welfare will inadvertently be rewarded with a Force that has low morale, unmotivated, abusive and repressive in nature.

This paper contends that as a result of the crass and insensitive attitude of the Nigerian state toward its police institution and policing techniques, members of the Force have become increasingly frustrated and manifest acts of aggression toward the larger society in forms of corruption and other unwholesome tendencies including flagrant abuse of citizens' human rights. This is not far-fetched from the way and manner the Nigerian government and people perceive and treat their Police Force. As a result, most police officers know that their worth is not given commensurate appreciation. They know that the system does not care about their welfare. They also know that they are not well equipped with the needed weaponry and tools for the onerous tasks and dangers they confront on a daily basis. To some, the society has simply predisposed them; to another, the system wants to dispense them. The resultant effect is a disillusioned, demoralized and corrupt police that is not ready, prepared or willing to fight crime.

From the forgoing, it stands to reason that the Nigerian Police Force manifest acts of indiscipline and corruption as a direct response to a society that cares less about them. It is already known that when one is frustrated, one is bound to exhibit acts of aggression towards the perceived object that causes the frustration. A number of factors will be considered below to depict how the Nigerian society displays acts of hostilities and consequently contributes to police corruption.

Defective Recruitment Process: A major problem with the Nigerian police is in the recruitment process. Oftentimes, police officers in Nigeria are recruited through the backdoor, a dubious process that is poked with corruption. By bribing the recruiting, senior officer(s), politicians and top government functionaries, individuals with relatively low level of education, values, and morale are recruited. Background checks on the candidates and their crime records are seldom carried out. As a result, the police service may end up with people that have no cognate knowledge, integrity and the necessary principles of a competent police officer. The serving officers know that the new ones that are coming to join them are

not the best that the system could offer. The implication is that morale will be low, there will be mutual distrust, competence and productivity will be compromised.

Centralization of the Police Force: The Nigerian Police Force is highly centralized and power and command flow from Abuja and trickle down to the state commands. This reduces the response time and has the tendency to make the force function like a lame duck as it is operationally ineffective to respond to emergencies. In some instances, the bureaucratic bottlenecks and hurdles junior officers go through to report cases of corruption and abuse of power by their superiors discourage them thereby allowing such malfeasances to fester. Oke, Braimah and Masajuwa (2021), contend that for effective policing, the Police command should be decentralized and made to be closer to the community by embracing policing through the community. According to them, decentralization of the Nigeria police will permit for seamless deployment in the communities which will make for effective collaboration with the citizens in policing through the community and reduces corrupt tendencies among the men and officers of the Force.

Poor Remuneration/Wages and Welfare of the Police Officers: many observers contend that this is the major cause of corruption among Nigerian police officers. The fact is that their salaries are rather too meagre and poor. This not only propels police officers to solicit bribes but also discourages skilled and capable officers from joining the Nigerian Police Force. It also leads to low motivation among the officers and renders them vulnerable to all kinds of corrupt and abusive practices. Effective delivery of police services requires highly motivated and honest personnel that are trained in the relevant areas such as social psychology and human behaviour. With low remunerations/salaries, depressed motivation and lack of the necessary skills, police officers are susceptible to all kinds of misconduct, including taking bribes and getting involved in criminal activities to improve their economic states. From the available data, the Nigerian policemen are poorly paid when compared with their counterparts in the USA, United Kingdom, Republic of South Africa and Ghana (Umana, 2018). Even the meagre salaries and allowances are not paid regularly leading to multiple demonstrations and protests among the rank and file of the Force.

On several occasions, the Nigerian Police have embarked on strikes just to press home their demands for better tools and working conditions. For instance, the rank and file of Nigeria Police on February 1, 2002, took the nation by surprise by embarking on strike. The striking officers were protesting poor service conditions including prolonged arrears and stagnation in ranks. The Federal Government had watched helplessly as the police officers held the nation to ransom (Sowunmi, 10 February 2006, This Day). On October 9, 2017, over 2000 police officers of the Kaduna State Police Command gathered in front of the salaries office inside the command headquarters to protest against the non-payment of their August and September salaries. Again, in December 2017, officers of the Adamawa State Police Command besieged the Nigeria Police Force Micro-Finance Bank in Yola, to demand immediate payment of their two months salaries. The aggrieved policemen said their families were dying in hunger. Furthermore, on March 2018, hundreds of policemen trooped the Mechanised Salary Section (MSS) of the Lagos State Police Command in Ikeja, to protest against the deductions from their salaries. The officers, who were from the rank and files said between N5, 000 and N35, 000 were deducted from their February salaries, while others lamented that they had not been paid for the month. The officers said the deductions have compounded their woes, as their salaries were meagre and they could not meet up with their needs. One of the protesting officers had said, "I am almost 20 years in service and I have a wife and children to cater. The N70, 000 is not enough for our upkeep in the first place. This is criminality of the highest order and we want it to stop" (Hanafi, 13 March, 2018, Punch Newspapers).

Dearth of Modern Policing Equipment/Gadgets: The Nigerian State has not provided the right equipment for the contemporary policing. It is a common sight in Nigeria to see that the criminals are more

sophisticated than the police. They are always a step ahead of the police. Modern policing relies heavily on science and technology to thrive. Skills in information technology, including geographic information technology, are also essential in policing. Unfortunately, these facilities and skills are lacking among the police force in Nigeria, hence, the resultant insecurity. The police officers are ill-equipped to fight crimes and combat criminals. It is an appalling situation where criminals have access to sophisticated weapons than the crime fighters. Most of the operational equipment used by the Nigeria Police Force—Armoured Personnel Carriers, vehicles, body armours, communications paraphernalia, boats, arms and ammunition, etc, are either obsolete or in a state disrepair. According to Ezeamalu (2018), a report highlighted the problems associated with budget preparation and implementation in the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). For instance, according to the report, the Force's budget preparation using a top-down approach leads to a lack of coherence in the budget process. Other than salaries, the NPF budget represents a contribution to costs rather than an attempt to fund the NPF. Rather than being based on operational needs, the budget is prepared using broad budget headings, with budgets based on increments of the previous year. Operational needs are not considered. For example, there is no list of vehicles, no certainty about personnel numbers and no policy on equipment needs, such as minimum equipment per officer. For decades, the NPF has been bedeviled by poor funding which has, in turn, resulted in poorly trained, ill-equipped personnel.

Corruption among the Police High Command: Apart from corrupt practices being perpetrated against the public, officers of the Nigerian police also indulge in corrupt practices against the Force. Periodically, staggering amounts of money meant to cover expenses for police operations are embezzled by those expected to arrest such financial misappropriation (Aborisade and Fayemi: 2015). In spite of the complaints of inadequate sums annually budgeted and allocated to the police, the frequent reality is that embezzlement and mismanagement has left the police with limited investigatory capacity and government forensic laboratories at a near standstill. The lack of needed resources appears to lead many police officers to adopt torture as their primary tool for collecting information from criminal suspects. Therefore, it is not surprising for police officers to complain of lack of basic needs for their operations such as fuel for their patrol vehicles, as well as their basic supplies for investigation which include writing materials. Rank-and-file of the Force are usually frustrated by the rampant acts of sleaze perpetrated by their super senior officers. At the top, senior police officials embezzle staggering sums of public funds.

A few examples will suffice here. According to Iheukwumere (2019), in 2012, the former Inspector General of Police, Sunday Ehindero, faced trial for embezzling 16 million Naira (approximately US\$44,422). Meanwhile, at the lower levels, rank-and-file police officers regularly extort money from the public, and crime victims must pay bribes before the police will handle their cases. Again, On 4 April 2005, Tafa Balogun, erstwhile Inspector-General of Police, was arraigned at the Federal High Court, Abuja on charges involving about N13 billion obtained through money laundering, theft and other sources (The Guardian Newspapers). The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission under Nuhu Ribadu brought 70 charges against Tafa Balogun covering the period from 2002 to 2004 (Daily Trust). He made a plea bargain with the court in exchange for returning much of the property and money. He was sentenced to six months in jail.

According to Olugbode (2021), in a recent discovery that left both Nigerians and the international community in consternation, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Abba Kyari, was in the eye of the storm when it was alleged that he collected bribe from Ramon Abbas aka Hushpuppi, a notorious con artist and serial cyber-criminal, to arrest, detain and torture his traducer. In addition, Yusuf (2021), alleged that in October 2020, Afeez Mojeed, a Lagos-based businessman accused Kyari of extorting N41 million from him in 2014

when the latter led the now-disbanded Police Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) in Lagos. So, right from his days in SARS up to recently when he was suspended, Abba Kyari has been known for alleged corruption, torture and conversion of properties belonging to crime suspects.

Given all the above scenarios, one can draw a simple conclusion that the State and the society at large have conspired to frustrate the Nigeria Police Force. This institutional sabotage causes untold hardship and frustration to officers and men of the Force. In reaction, police officers vent their grievances on the populace in diverse forms including taking bribes, mounting illegal roadblocks, snatching of ballot boxes, and even manifesting hostile acts such as extrajudicial killings, torture, robbery and rape of female detainees. In other words, police officers display aggressive behaviours to the society as a result of the frustration they confront in the line of their duty.

CONCLUSION

There is no denying the fact that corruption has taken a cataclysmic effect both in the Police Force and the Nigerian society at large. However, all attention is usually shifted to police corruption when the officers and men of the Force extort money and take bribes either from the detainees, motorists, complainants, carry out extra-judicial killing of innocent citizens on trumped up excuses or when they collude with criminal elements to subvert the course of justice. Nevertheless, little or nothing is known as to the motif or *raison d'etat* for police corruption. This paper posits that police corruption is a response to the hostile society or environment in which they operate or function. A situation where the officers are not properly equipped with the needed sophisticated weapons and modern communication facilities to do the onerous tasks they are saddled with thereby, predisposing them to untold dangers could be a cause for police corruption or brutality. Furthermore, when the welfare of policemen and their families is not taken as a top priority by the State could be a springboard for hostility and corruption against the society. In other words, as a result of the frustration and deprivation members of the Force go through in the line of their duty, they tend to manifest tendencies of aggressive behaviour including official corruption.

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