

STATE POLICING IN NIGERIA: BEYOND NECESSITY

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Abstract

The delivery of internal security is the exclusive role of the government and should be done with all urgency, seriousness and sincerity. The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) presently lacks: adequate personnel, adequate funds, adequate infrastructure, up-to-date equipment, intelligence training, specialized departments, freedom from political interference cum manipulation, discipline, and technology, all of which is essential for effectiveness and efficiency. It is based on this proviso that this paper attempts to remedy the inadequacies of the Nigerian Police Force arguing that in spite of the socio-economic, ecological and socio-cultural impediments of the institution and the objections against decentralizing the institution, having a state police is the most effectual way to go for it will have a far reaching positive effect in curbing insecurity, crime, armed robbery, kidnappings, and extortion currently bedeviling the Nigerian state especially at the rural level, after all, most of the groups start by organizing themselves at this level.

Keywords: State police, Nigerian police, NPF reform, Police rebranding, Political instability

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Introduction

The need for safety and security is not only inherent but is also an instinctual need. Man craves the need to be safe, sound and free from attacks of any kind. Man as a social animal feels obligated to constantly interact, and in this course of this intermingling, man is bound to offend and be offended, man is bound to launch and suffer spasm, hence the need to secure and save man from man, for man first of all is the enemy of man. One would not blame the creator for giving man the task of dominating and subduing the earth since man has misconstrued this divine assignment to mean subjugating his fellow man. In view of this there is no gainsaying that safety is not just a requisite but is a necessity. Little wonder in his theory of human needs, Abraham Maslow gave the safety and security need a favourable position in his five-tiered hierarchy of needs. It is based on this premise that one begins to look at how man came to be in dire need of safety and security and how well this grim desire has been met. The society is now in a state of one-eyed-slug where one does not sleep with two eyes closed for fear of attack and reprisal attack.

The society we live in is such wherein the child is the enemy of the father who in turn traumatizes the mother who also is a threat to the neighbour, and the vicious cycle becomes endless. One wouldn't therefore be surprised if even men of God have resorted to hiring bodyguards in the discharge of their spiritual calling. The Nigerian terrain is constantly bedeviled by incessant unjustified killings, kidnappings, robbery, ethnic cleansing, border disputes, rituals, and communal clashes, to mention few. Is it a crime to be a Nigerian? Why am I a Nigerian? Can't I just leave this country? These questions asked by Nigerian youths are now said like a daily prayer by many. Law and order has even become alien in some parts of the country, so much so that normalcy is now viewed as abnormality.

However, in the face of all these, it must be noted that man still wittingly yearns for a society that is not only safe, secure and serene, but also one in which child rearing becomes promising, where law and order are not only mere discourses but are ensured and sustained. This then begs the question, what has the society itself done to ensure its own safety? What has the government done to ensure that man wakes next to man with a smile and not a smirky frown likely to be

followed by a kick in the teeth. This also leads one to ask who exactly is in charge of maintaining law and order within a political terrain. Observation however shows that the police is in charge of maintaining the long sought law and order, peace and tranquility, safety and security. Meanwhile, the Nigeria police otherwise referred to as Nigeria Police Force (NPF) does not seem to be getting this right. The NPF is known for many derogatory names which conveniently negates what it (NPF) stands for. The common man seems to have lost hope in the NPF, many even prefer the Nigerian Army which is supposed to in charge of securing the country against external aggression, to be in charge of internal security, simple because the latter is known for discipline.

A few testimonies from Nigerians as reported on Nigeria Police Watch (<http://www.nigeriapolicewatch.com/resources/about-the-nigeria-police/>) will reveal the level of hope and trust they have left in the NPF.

I wish to report the bad conducts of some officers of the Nigeria Police Force who are less concerned about the good image which the Inspector General of Police is building for the force. In defiance of the "operation no road blocks" policy of the present IGP, some officers have continued mounting road blocks and extorting money from motorists at Ora-Igbomina area in Osun State. The exact locations where these illegal roadblocks are mounted include Ora-Igbomina between Siraju Primary School (Ora town) and Oan-Ekiti town. I have informed higher authorities using the contacts on your website but the roadblocks still operate till date. These bad eggs within the police force who taint/mar the image of the police should be checked without further delay because they constitute a threat to citizens' peace. Thank you. Wale S. from Osun.

It is sad to learn that some officers of the Nigerian police no longer protect and serve instead they extort money from its citizens. The following division namely, New Benin police division, SARS Benin, Zone 5 Adesuwa. They now find pleasures in harassing and maltreating youth of Benin City. I was about entering my bank at Akpakpava when a bus blocked me from entering the bank. I was so afraid when I realized that it was the new Benin police division and they were

not on uniforms just bullet proof and guns and they ask me where I was going and I told them I am trying to retrieve my ATM card with the bank. They forced me to enter the bus without any crime, they removed everything on me; my wallet and phone inclusive. They searched through my phones and they also saw a deposit slip of 40, 000 Naira with me. They asked where I got the money from and I said from my parents and that money was meant for my school fees. Immediately they put a false allegation on me that I am a fraudster popularly known as yahoo boy. They insisted that they will collect N20, 000 thousand from me or they will send me to Abuja for fraud. Please this is violation of human right let the authority place a monitory team on the so called surveillance team. I LOVE MY COUNTRY NIGERIA -SAMSON, Benin City

For over one week some terribly armed boys have been terrorizing Ajenipa street, Bariga Lagos with Guns, specifically at night and just yesterday in the Afternoon they attacked about 2:00pm there has been no response from the police to tackle those boys. We ask the police authorities to come to our rescue before things gets worse with us here. -Unnamed.

The above testimonies amongst many others show the level of rot in the NPF which has culminated in its blacklisting by Nigerian. Although, many have argued that one of the problems of the NPF is its centralization in the centre thereby leading to the call for its decentralization to allow for efficiency and effectiveness. Whether the decentralization of the NPF to be controlled and managed by states will lead to its efficiency or its further rot merits an examination. It has been postulated that the creation of state police will ameliorate the problems of the NPF as presently experienced, that it will not only lead to efficiency, but will increase its level of accountability, probity and even encourage competition among the various states, even though some other critics have maintained the creation of state police at this present moment when political offices in Nigeria is like a gate pass to the kingdom of heaven will further see state actors exploiting the NPF for the gains. It therefore becomes imperative to assess the state of the NPF in line with its objectives and how devolving its structure will help to restore hope and guarantee law, order and security.

Theoretical Framework

This paper is guided by Structural Functionalism theory as expanded by Gabriel Almond from the works of scholars like Emile Durkheim, Bronislaw, Radcliffe-Brown, David Easton and Talcott Parsons. The theory presupposes that the society can be studied just as the human body is studied by examining the structures existing in the society, their functions and well they perform these supposed functions and by diagnosing those that are not working with the aim of devising solutions to them so as to restore balance. The political system consists of various structures that interact interdependently to ensure the continued existence of the system. In other words, the lapse in one structure of the political system can have a far reaching effect on the whole- society. For instance, the police force in Nigeria is a structure whose lapse can have a devastating effect on the whole society by furthering insecurity, crime, violence and such deviations.

Following the postulation of this theory, the Nigerian Police Force as an institution or structure has a role to play in the survival of the society and thus deserves to be diagnosed for problems with extensive solutions proffered for continued being of the society. In this in lieu of the above that this paper seeks to review the Nigerian Police Force as an institution whose existence is crucial to that of the whole and to highlight its present woes, propose solutions to it and advance the cause for state policing in Nigeria which the author argues is the most effective antidote to failed security and police ineffectiveness in the Nigerian state.

History of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF)

The first police force in Nigeria was established in 1861 by the then British colonial administration having obtained permission from London to establish a Consular Guard comprising of 30 men. This small body of men though based in Lagos colony, was known as "Hausa Guard" owing to its ethnic composition, followed by additional police forces in east and north comprising largely of recruits from outside the communities in which they were deployed to. Meanwhile, these early forces were known for notorious abuses and general lawlessness which reached its peak in 1891 when the consul general of the Oil Rivers Protectorate (presently Eastern Nigeria) expressed shock at the "numerous acts of lawlessness and pillage" by the police whom the community referred to as "forty thieves" in police uniform. The colonial police was

primarily established to protect British economic and political interests which they achieved through brutal subjugation of indigenous communities (that resisted colonial business), use of violence, repression and extreme use of force.

Following the merger of Lagos colony and the southern and northern protectorates by the British in 1913, and named the new colony Nigeria, the northern and southern regional police forces were also merged in 1930, to form the colony's first national police - the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). The British also established local police forces under the control of traditional leaders even though both the NPF and local police forces were riddled with numerous acts of abuse and corruption and traffic division all of which lowered the prestige of the force. Subsequent after Nigeria's independence in 1960, the constitution devolved significant power to the three regional governments; Northern, Western and Eastern regions, while the Federal government retained control of the NPF, even though the regional governments continued to maintain the local police forces. Although the local police forces were to be disbanded by the military government which emerged after two military coups in 1966 arising from allegations that the local police was being perpetuated for partisan purposes by the regional governments against political rivals. Resulting from this, the local police forces in 1972 were fully integrated into the national force - NPF and came under the control of the Federal government which hitherto maintained sole responsibility of policing in Nigeria.

Judging from the above, it can be deduced that local police or state police is not alien to Nigeria. That the local police forces were infused into the national body for fear of further manipulation by the political elite to threaten, harass and subdue their political opponents and to avoid a reoccurrence in present day has defeated the call for the establishment of a state police is ridiculous, since the same fate suffered by the then local police forces is now being suffered (at even a larger degree) by the NPF showing that the region, location or control of the police force is not the problem but that the NPF entirely needs to be restructured and rebranded. More so, the fact that the present NPF cannot cater for the teeming populace is an indicator that the force needs to be decentralized and controlled at the state level to cater for the security needs of each state. Nigerialpolicewatch.com writes that “*at the end of military rule in 1999, there were*

approximately 140,000 police officers in the Nigeria Police Force. This amounted to just one police officer for every 820 Nigerians, well below the United Nations-recommended general benchmark of one police officer per 400 citizens". This further drives home the point that the centralization of the NPF has led to mismanagement, hence the need for states to control their police forces in the spirit of healthy competition which will ultimately lead to efficiency.

Rationale for the Nigeria Police Force

The Nigerian 1999 constitution 214 (1) reads:

(1) There shall be a police force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section no other police force shall be established for the Federation or any part thereof.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this Constitution

(a) the Nigeria Police Force shall be organized and administered in accordance with such provisions as may be prescribed by an act of the National Assembly;

(b) the members of the Nigeria Police shall have such powers and duties as maybe conferred upon them by law;

(c) the National Assembly may make provisions for branches of the Nigeria Police Force forming part of the armed forces of the Federation or for the protection of harbours, waterways, railways and air fields.

215. (1) There shall be

(a) an Inspector-General of Police who, subject to section 216(2) of this Constitution shall be appointed by the President on the advice of the Nigeria Police Council from among serving members of the Nigeria Police Force;

(b) a Commissioner of Police for each state of the Federation who shall be appointed by the Police Service Commission.

(2) The Nigeria Police Force shall be under the command of the Inspector-General of Police and contingents of the Nigeria Police Force stationed in a state shall, subject to the authority of the Inspector-General of Police, be under the command of the Commissioner of Police of that state.

(3) The President or such other Minister of the Government of the Federation as he may authorize in that behalf may give to the Inspector-General of Police such lawful directions with

respect to the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order as he may consider necessary, and the Inspector-General of Police shall comply with those direction or cause them to be compiled with.

(4) Subject to the provisions of this section, the Governor of a state or such Commissioner of the Government state as he may authorize in that behalf, may give to the Commissioner of Police of that state such lawful directions with respect to the maintenance and securing of public safety and public order within the state as he may consider necessary, and the Commissioner of Police shall comply with those directions or cause them to be complied with: Provided that before carrying out any such directions under the foregoing provisions of this subsection the Commissioner of Police may request that the matter be referred to the President or such minister of the Government of the Federation as may be authorized in that behalf by the President for his directions.

(5) The question whether any, and if so what, directions have been given under this section shall not be inquired into in any court.

216.

(1) Subject to the provisions of this constitution, the Nigeria Police Council may, with the approval of the President and subject to such conditions as it may think fit, delegate any of the powers conferred upon it by this Constitution to any of its members or to the Inspector-General of Police or any other member of the Nigeria Police Force.

(2) Before making any appointment to the office of the Inspector-General of Police or removing him from office the President shall consult the Nigeria Police Council.

The general duties of the police as contained in the Police Act (1967), Part II, No 4 reads:

The police shall be employed for the prevention and detection of crime, the apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are directly charged, and shall perform such military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required of them by, or under the authority of this or any other Act. [1979 No. 23.]

Challenges of the Nigeria Police Force

The Nigeria Police Force (2008) in its annual report submitted that the police is plagued by a myriad of factors such as lack of resources, poor condition of service, lack of appropriate and adequate training, poor government support, and ill-equipped workforce. Coupled with these are the police extortion, bribery, electoral fraud, kickbacks, harassment, corruption and other vices common among the police system which culminates to lack of efficiency.

The challenges faced by the Nigerian Police Force can be collapsed under Socio-economic, Ecological and Socio-cultural factors.

Socio-Economic

Corruption – An average Nigerian without the full knowledge of how the NPF operates, its structures, its leaders, or even its budget, can easily relate to a common sensation that the Nigerian policeman is corrupt. This does not arise from tales or mere thoughts but from practical experiences in the forms of extortion, employment-patronage, bribery, nepotism, misappropriation and kickbacks. Adebayo and Ojo (2009) puts it aptly when they aver that without doubt, the Nigeria police is really enmeshed in corruption like several other state institutions. But the degree of corrupt practices in the police appears too deep into the “marrows” of the organization. If personnel of other institutions engage in corruption at all, they do it perhaps with caution while that of the police is done more in the full glare of the public. This manifestation of corrupt practices in the Nigerian police has really gone too far to mar the image of the police in the eyes of the public. If anything, the Nigeria police is an institution that no Nigerian loves to come in contact with despite the fact that it is supposed to be a friend of the society.

Their contribution is an attestation of what an average Nigerian perceives of the Force and why they so much loathe the ‘men in black’. Alemika (1999) postulated that the police corruption is a serious issue because they are expected to be moral as law enforcement agency. The issue of police corruption is an undeniable fact with several evidence of their involvement. These among many others are; police connivance with some individuals to help offenders out of police custody after obtaining money from suspects, 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.

Notably and most demeaning of the forms of corruption exhibited by the NPF is extortion from motorists on highways. They do this without regard for the law or respect for their uniform. As put by Newswatch Magazine (2003), *“more often than not, Nigeria police personnel are seen unashamedly with guns tucked under their arms or pointing at motorists, demanding and collecting N20, 000 from each passing commercial vehicle they come in contact with”*. The Inspector General of Police (IGP), *is waging serious war against public extortion and so far he has admitted arresting no fewer than 250 officers and men of the Police with the sum of close to N100, 000.00 recovered from them”*.

Funding – To effectively discharge their duties, the Nigerian Police Force needs to be adequately funded even though this seems to be far off in reality considering the total amount budgeted for security in the budget. The truth however remains that without proper funding, the NPF cannot deliver on its primary assignment. The funds accruing to the Force is not enough to cater for their necessities considering the rising manpower [though low compared to the entire population], machineries, training, hi-tech gadgets, modern tools etc., as experienced in stalled promotions, delayed salaries etc. We therefore should not expect a transformed Force without a transmuted remuneration.

It is clear that without the uprooting of the vestiges of corruption from the NPF, there will not be any meaningful development or rebranding as demanded by the populace. A lot is expected from the NPF but they seem to be falling short of standards and expectation due to lack of funds and poor remuneration which has been worsened by entrenched corruption in the institution, which means that even if there allocation is increased, there is the tendency that it will be looted and re-looted. Hence, there is the need for a total overhauling of the structure in such a way that it is broken down and placed under various governments who will properly monitor the activities of the police and be held accountable for their actions or inactions.

Ecological

Training – The policeman is supposed to a friend of the citizenry and not otherwise, so also the policeman has to be trained in a friendly environment so as to be friendly not to be trained like a criminal who is gearing up to be the enemy of the state. At present the NPF lacks proper training especially in line with modern day practices. The use of hi-tech gadgets, interrogation tactics, subduing tactics etc. are missing elements in the NPF. With such important elements missing, one wonders the chunk of police officers we have. The use of guns should be the last option when Tasers can be deployed to subduing a non-cooperative suspect in such a way that casualties are minimized especially when they are not yet proven guilty.

Similar to this is the issue of education and minimum entry requirement into the NPF which needs to be revisited to be at least Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE). There is the need for the Nigerian policeman to be able to communicate effectively in English language since they will be dealing with various sets of people with different levels of education.

Manipulation – The NPF has been accused of subject to manipulation by the ruling or dominant class so much so that people have lost confidence in the Nigerian police. In a plural state such as Nigeria where religion and ethnic affiliations are sensitive elements, we cannot afford to have the ‘guardians’ of the society in the pocket of one or few people as this spells doom and perversion of the force. As noted by Olong and Agbonika (2013), the ultimate power of control over the Police in Nigeria resides with the President. The Commissioner of Police in charge of a State command is saddled with the responsibility of maintaining security within the State and in carrying out such duty, the Government of the State may give to the Commissioner of Police of that State such lawful directions for that purpose. The Commissioner of Police has discretion either to carry out the instruction immediately or seek the permission of the President or the Minister-in-Charge of Police Affairs in the country. The provision ensures that the ultimate control of the Police remain with the Federal Government.

This is very dangerous in a democratic setting as too much power is placed in these individuals who can manipulate the force for realization of their selfish interest. According to Olong and

Agbonika (2013), one sad aspect of the Nigeria Police under the present dispensation is that the Police have become a tool for the perpetration of electoral malpractice and an instrument in the hand of the ruling Government to frustrate popular democracy.

Interference – Political intimidation and politicking is becoming a popular instrument of governance in the Nigerian space. The police has been constantly used by the ruling class to oppress, suppress, intimidate and shut up opposition by interfering with the structure and operations of the force thus making the police force a personal property of power accumulation by the political elites either directly or indirectly. This form of interference however is detrimental to the development of the institutions whose leaders are mere puppets and stooges of the ruling class thus fastening their initiative, innovations and discretionary tendencies to the mercy of the ‘master’.

Rotimi (1999) (cited by Adebayo and Ojo, 2009) opine that the NPF can be used to perpetuate anti-democratic practices which is antithetical to sustenance of democratic values is electoral fraud. At all elections, the Nigerian Police is never left out. Thus, politicians have always been finding good allies in them. Members of the opposition parties are harassed at will by policemen to ensure that election results are tilted to the advantage of the highest bidder. It is difficult for elections to be rigged with-out the active connivance of policemen, going by the past experience [emphasis added].

There is no gainsaying that the NPF needs to be rescued from the hands of ruling class where it has been subjected to manipulation, intimidation and interference and become totally independent so as to effectively discharge its duties to the Nigerian citizenry. However, this is difficult if not impossible considering the present mode of operation where the police force is centralized and under the control of few individuals. To fully realize its potentials, bring innovation and creativity to bear, the NPF needs to be decentralized and allowed to grow at different levels under different governments with healthy competition.

Socio-cultural

Bad image – The Nigerian police force is suffering from great distrust from the general populace who is at disparity with the ways and methods of the ‘black uniform’. Nigerians feel more threatened by a policeman than by an armed robber. After all, an armed robber hardly robs in daylight or with impunity unlike the policeman who does it with confidence. This bad image as known to both young and old has weakened the connection between the policeman and the common man where in the latter ascribes bribery, corruption, extortion, embezzlement and forcing victims to pay for bail and investigation, with the policeman. In the words of Adebayo and Ojo (2009) “the police have always been found wanting and incapable of stemming the crises most especially because of the disdain for them by members of the public”.

With such a stark distrust, disdain and disconnect with the NPF, it is not surprising that the common man does not rely on the institution for provision of safety and security and such a relationship is injurious to the Nigerian state.

Lack of equipment and facilities – Armed robbers and kidnappers have adopted more sophisticated medium and tools in carrying out their attacks. The use of waterways to escape after robbery was formerly alien to the Nigerian space until recently when robbers after an attack in Ikorodu, Festac, and Lekki environs of Lagos State, not also forgetting to mention that of Agbara, Ogun State. These are pointers that Western forms of attacks are beginning to be imported into the country and the NPF cannot afford to be lagging behind in nipping it in the bud before it becomes another industry. The NPF is presently deficient in the supply of facilities such as speed boats, surveillance system, drones, helicopter, horses, Satellite tracking system, Tasers, high speed vehicles and motorbikes, national database, technology, communication gadgets, spy gadgets, computers and other sophisticated devices needed for crime detection and crime rate reduction.

Inadequate personnel – It is totally appalling to learn that the most populous black nation with a population of over 170 million people is manned or guarded by a paltry police force of a little over 370, 000 men giving a horrendous fraction of one policeman to 469 citizens as against the

recommendations of one policeman to 400 citizens by the United Nations. The recruitment effort of the present administration into the NPF should be lauded [even though relatively low]. The federal government announced recently that 10, 000 police officers should be recruited into the police force, even though over 800, 000 people applied.

Not until there is a revamping of the institution by way of massive recruitment and re-structuring into state-arms, the NPF might have to battle with its present despairs for a longer period than anticipated.

Lack of intelligence training and specialized unit– Gathering information for investigation is crucial in ensuring the safety on the citizenry, and has made advanced countries invest heavily in training sleeper and special agents who operate clandestinely in different capacities. The NPF is sure deficient in training. Countries in the world have been able to solve major crimes through the help of their intelligence units, they have made spying a craft and an art essential to national security and have created units of Special Forces whose information gathering methods have been remarkable. There is the need for the NPF to create, equip and sustain more specialized units for patrol, transportation, information technology, organized crime, homicide, drugs, emergency, special victims, strategic response, crime scene, evidence collection and processing, school safety, and more importantly counterterrorism.

The Nigerian Police Force is definitely far away from where it should be and will have to work hard to get there. Having been riddled with bad image, lack of trust and disdain, the NPF cannot effectively carry out its responsibilities with people who are not willing to cooperate, not even considering that the NPF itself lacks the requisite facilities and equipment needed and more devastatingly, the personnel to man these equipment and facilities while the few ones available are not properly trained or lack intelligence-skills and are not properly placed in specialized units. Consequently, the NPF has to be decentralized for proper management, though some have argued that decentralizing the NPF will further subject it to manipulation, intimidation by political opponents and might be too expensive to run. Well said, but they did not consider that by decentralizing the NPF, it will be under scrutiny and microscopic check as it becomes easier

to keep track of their progress under specific governments or in specific states. More so, there will be room for competition and comparison which will keep governments on their toes [after all, no state actor wants to be seen as joking with the security of its citizens]. Meanwhile, on the issue of funding, it is ridiculous to accept that state actors can allot funds to white elephant and bogus projects, yet doubt that they can do the same for security.

Solutions

The above challenges currently faced by the NPF are not without solutions, it only requires strategy and political will. Meanwhile, the following captures the panacea to the present predicaments.

Re-branding – The degree and extent of trust or lack of in the Nigerian police is alarming and needs to be cushioned before the common man is finally pitched against the guardian of the society. The Nigerian police as a matter of urgency should look inwards and purge its bad eggs, make examples of defaulters and make laws to discourage further occurrences. The force will also have to make a firm stand against corruption which has eaten deep into the fabric of the institution. Corruption, kickbacks, bribery, extortion etc. have to be checked with harsh penalties imposed on erring officers regardless of the hierarchy. Restoring trust in the force starts with the officers in the force and as Adebayo and Ojo (2009) puts it, for a better organization to be evolved, both the society and the Nigeria police itself need re-orientation. The mass media may assist here. The entire citizenry should be well educated as regards their basic human rights. That to offer bribe for a bail-able offence is wrong or to offer money to Policemen on the road even without soliciting for it is immoral. Above all, discipline is crucial to effective policing. If the officers are not self-disciplined, the corps becomes worse-off. It is only a well-disciplined police like the military that can serve as a catalyst to democratic sustenance.

The NPF force should also make arrangements to reward hard work and achievements for outstanding performance(s). These rewards should be in monetary and other forms so as to dissuade police officers from engaging in corruption, bribery and extortion.

Specialized training and departments – The absence of these units and other specialized units has made the work of the NPF somewhat difficult to detect. Little or no attention [in some cases] is paid to training and/or retraining in and establishment of more specialized departments or units such as *homicide*, *information technology*- using access to database and info-surveillance to check mate the ‘Yahoo-Yahoo’ rampage and other ‘419’ or fraud perpetuated over the internet, even hacking, *patrol*– both on highways and waterways, *strategic response*- the response time of the NPF deserves proper attention, *accounts*- to effectively trace monies illegally moved within and outside the banking sector, *research*- to collect data on crimes and accidents so as to find out the reasons, patterns and ways of reducing them, *evidence collection and processing*- with the ability to process evidence with technology using scanners, forensics, tweezers, and print readers, *surveillance*- the blowing up of pipelines especially as recently intensified by the Niger Delta Avengers can easily be monitored and the culprits brought to book, and to mention few, *counterterrorism*- present day realities reveals how dire this is to Nigeria considering the existence of Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani herdsmen attacks, and Niger Delta Avenger agitation.

There is also the need to demarcate the jurisdiction of the police force from other security agencies such as Army, Civil Defence Corps, State Security Service and National Security to avoid overlapping and unnecessary duplication.

Increased funding – Central to the provision of modern equipment and gadgets, facilities, creation of specialized departments, training, increase in personnel, and increased remuneration is increased funding without which other infrastructure remains a fantasy. The NPF upon whom the internal security of the nation is dependent has to be adequately funded by the federal government to meet up with its aspirations.

State Police – The clamour for a state police is the theme of this paper and the author hereby argues that with state policing in Nigeria, the above issues can be adequately dealt with as state governors will be able to take charge of the running of the police to lessen the burden on the federal government and give room for efficiency, innovation, development and management

arising from healthy competition between the various state police force(s). The author is not claiming to be oblivious of the concern for lack of funds to run such an institution at the state level, but avers that state governors who find it easy to award over bloated projects should not find it impossible to make state security a priority. Besides, writers have also suggested that principle of Asymmetry should be adopted such that states with the means to set up state police should do so without having to force another to do same. It should strictly be based on the ability and buoyancy of the state. The author hereby turn to advance the reasons for state policing in Nigeria.

The above view was supported by Bamigbetan (2004) who noted that “even the burden of building or rehabilitation of Police Stations has been carried by some State Governors. Naturally, as Chief Security Officers/Chief Executives of the states, it would be foolhardy for them to take a hard stand not to release funds if it would avert a security breakdown in their states. This would only backfire against them as citizens of their states would only lose confidence in them, mostly not being privy to the logistics involved”.

State Police: The Edge(s)

Ecological Edge– Due to the plurality of the Nigerian state, there are various ethnic groups with their own languages and culture. Language is an appealing elements that brings people close and gives a sense of identity and belongingness. State policing will allow for people of a particular region to communicate effectively with indigenous residents of a state or ethnic group, making investigation easy since the investigator perfectly understands the witness and the investigator is also able to properly interrogate a victim in his own language. In order words, communication will be easier and more effective for reporting incidences. On the other way, residents [especially those in rural areas] will have a feeling of safety arising from the confidence that they are protected by their kinsfolks who will never want to jeopardize the security of their respective states. More so, these police officers will have a perfect knowledge of the environment and terrain which will come handy in monitoring activities of illegal groups and associations, flush them out and bring them justice and in turn reducing crime rates. Armed robbers and insurgent groups are known to seek abode in woodlands and jungles, even forests, away from the eyes of

the law but can be checkmated by a policeman who knows the territory and is able to track offenders.

This will also give room for rural safety wherein rural residents will have access law enforcement with ease and be shielded from the raging storm of insurgence gradually sweeping the country and will make it possible for militia and rebel groups to be addressed before they gain traction and threaten the security of the country as is currently experienced in Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen attack and Niger Delta Avengers. Before Boko Haram became this strong, they've had time to gather, plan, strategize and structure and could have been easily stopped before it came this far if there was a state police. So also, the Fulani herdsmen attack demands the attention of state police before it becomes another mutinous sect just the same way Niger Delta Avengers who have been rendered curbed at inception if there was a state police. Indeed, on the overall, there will be reduction in crime rate since most crimes and groups start small and can easily be detected by a state police, considering that indigenous residents have ease of access to report illegal gatherings.

Ikuteyijo (2009) says community policing entails community partnership in creating a safe and secure environment for all. It is policing whereby the people take active part in their own affairs. With community policing, the police is not seen as a stranger whose presence stands for danger and imminent hazard, but as partners in development.

According to The Dawn Newspaper (2011), community policing in Nigeria does not replace all other policing styles and methods but harness core policing functions such as traffic enforcement, crime prevention as well as public order management. These responsibilities remain essential and are entirely compatible and complementary if they meet the performance standards and criteria demanded by the community policing.

Socio-Economic Edge – Having mentioned that the present NPF is lacking adequate personnel needed to man the various departments and secure the teeming population, there is no doubt that when state police(s) are established, every state will have to employ into the various departments

thereby creating employment opportunities in each of these states. Coupled with this is the fact that each of these states will require modern and computerized equipment which means that the services of consultants and experts will be sought while the needed equipment, facilities and infrastructures will be acquired thus creating investment opportunity for businessmen and government. In other words, there will be a multiplier effect of having a state police on the economy of such state which will also allow for redistribution of income.

In the words of Adedeji (2012), security these days, in Nigeria, is seen as protection of Abuja the seat of power alone. It is the individual states that now spend heavily to subsidize the operation of policemen deployed to their domains to ensure that lives and properties are secured. For instance, Lagos State has in place a Security Trust Fund which is used to fund the operation of the state Rapid Response Squad. Arms and ammunitions are purchased from this fund while officers and men serving in the outfit are also paid special allowance. Ogun State and Oyo State to mention but few also have ad hoc security agencies funded from money in the States Security Fund. If a state spends heavily on matters relating to security, then it must be able to exert some form of control, after all he who pays the piper dictates the tune.

Socio-Cultural Edge – With a decentralized structure, the state police will be easily controlled and monitored as against the present structure and the force will be more organized since they are at state levels and can have its progressed tracked by the populace. Accountability and probity will be encouraged while healthy competition will increase, restoring faith in the force and doling criticisms when necessary. In other words, there will be ease of oversight since there is a governor to hold responsible and there is a yardstick to measure the performance and effectiveness of the force against.

Recommendations and Conclusion

The flurries of crime, homicide, armed robbery, kidnappings and more disconcerting, insecurity across the Nigerian state requires prompt response from the Federal Government of Nigeria. The Boko Haram insurgency, MEND, Biafra, MASSOB, IPOB, Niger Delta Avengers, and the Fulani herdsmen are all evidences of the brittleness of the Nigerian state and the level of political

instability currently rocking the state; it behooves the Nigerian state to secure the life and property of its citizens against these ‘agitators’ so as to ensure the continuity of the Nigerian state. It therefore becomes imperative to ask what the role of the Nigerian police is in guaranteeing internal security and how momentously the force has failed largely due to its centralized structure which has made management, control, performance, effectiveness and efficiency difficult [if not impossible] thus sparking the call for state police in Nigeria which at this moment is beyond necessity; Nigeria cannot afford to continually travel down this lane of dissent.

It is unfortunate that the NPF is a victim of the same reasons why local police was proscribed and what fate is ‘assumed’ awaits state police if created. However, state police remains a logical solution to the insecurity issues in the country and is a right step in ensuring ‘true’ federalism in Nigeria.

This paper argues that in spite of the arguments against the creation of state police(s) in Nigeria, the reality in terms of the fragility of the Nigerian state and the challenges with operating ‘true’ federalism manifested as agitating, ideological and secessionist groups provides a more superior argument for the decentralization of the institution and the following should be ensured: First, the morality of leadership in Nigeria should be redressed so much so that the followership can emulate and reinforce same; corruption, bribery, extortion etc. can be drastically reduced and finally abrogated first by auditing the account regularly and leaders frowning against corruption with disciplinary measures, the corruption and bribery in NPF will reduce so that the same fate does not befall the state police. In addition, promotion and reward should be entrenched across government institutions to entrench the spirit of hard work backed by motivation. A nation-wide orientation on the meaning of state police should be organized through the National Orientation Agency (NOA) stating the need, revised entry requirement, and training required. Third, states should not be forced to create state police due to disparity in economic viability but states which are densely populated and with the resources should be empowered. Fourth, technology should be the bedrock of state police(s); the use of hi-tech gadgets, surveillance system, satellite tracking, database, and other sophisticated tools will come handy in apprehending culprits. Fifth,

the principles of federalism should be properly adhered to instead of tilting towards unitary trappings. Sixth, states with inadequate means can be encouraged to adopt the public-private partnership approach. Public-police partnership allows citizens to step beyond their daily law-abiding lives and get involved in projects, programs and other specific efforts to enhance their community's safety (Wroblewski and Hess, 2003).

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