



## POLICE CORRUPTION AND INTERNAL SECURITY IN NIGERIA

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### ABSTRACT

*This article examines corrupt practices among members of the Nigeria Police Force in the context of rising internal insecurity. Of particular concern was to determine the extent and dimensions of corruption within the police, the factors responsible for such practices and how they impact on the safety of lives and property of members of the public. The research combined both primary and secondary data which were collected through opinion survey (questionnaire) and content analysis of secondary materials (journals, articles, newspapers and internet materials) respectively. The study revealed that police corruption is a major contributing factor to internal insecurity in Nigeria. A commonly mentioned effect of police corruption on the society is the loss of lives through extrajudicial killings; arrest and illegal detention of citizens orchestrated by policemen and citizens' unwillingness to report suspected cases of crimes to police making such crimes difficult to curtail. The causes of these anomalies included inadequate or irregular welfare packages for policemen, low level of professionalism within the force and political class interference. On the basis of these findings, the study recommends that the authorities should recruit more and better educated police officers, improve logistics and welfare packages and move towards an independent and community police.*

### INTRODUCTION

From all indications, rampant crime and internal insecurity are among the most serious problems confronting Nigeria today. These challenges are also believed to be among the major issues inhibiting the country's socio-economic and political development. For instance insecurity is frequently cited as a reason for foreign investors' reluctance to come and invest in Nigeria (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2007. p.63). The phenomenon of brain-drain which has seen the departure of hundreds of thousands of talented Nigerians overseas has also been linked to the problems of crime and insecurity (Mba and Ekeopara, 2012). In response to the rising problem of crime and insecurity, successive Nigerian government has in recent years created several new law enforcement agencies (NDLEA, NAPTIP, EFCC, ICPC, NSCDC, etc.), while making attempts to strengthen the Nigerian Police Force, which is the oldest institution for maintaining law and security. But despite such reforms and the presence of multiple security and law enforcement agencies, studies continue to show that crime rates, especially corruption, is on a steady increase in Nigeria (Naagbantun, et al, 2009; Enweremadu, 2012; Adebayo, 2013).

Although Nigeria is now dotted with a plethora of law enforcement agencies, the Nigerian Police Force still remains the leading anti-crime and security agency in the country (The Police Act of 1943). All over the world, the police is the principal public agency for the control of crime and management of internal security (Isima, J. and Chukwuma, I., 2010:14). It is an embodiment of the coercive powers of any modern state, to the extent that among all the security agencies that may be found in any state, it is the agency with the closest and most frequent contacts with the citizens (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2007. p.68). It is through the police that the state performs what can be regarded as the most important function or *raison d'être* of a modern state - the protection of lives and property. This is why the performance of the police is a big issue in virtually every country. Most citizens usually judge the effectiveness of their government or political leadership on the basis of the performance of agencies charged with public security, especially the police. It is in that light that the Nigerian Police Force has often been a target



of public criticisms by citizens who have generally adjudged her performance over the years as poor.

Going by the Nigerian legal framework, the Police is the agency directly charged with the responsibility of ensuring peace and security within the country. For instance, Section 4 of the Police Act CAP 359 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990, states that: *“The police shall be employed for prevention and detection of crime. The apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order, the protection of life and property and the due employment of all laws and regulation with which they are directly charged and shall perform such military duties within...Nigeria as maybe required by them or under the authority of this or any other Act” (Police Act CAP 359:4).*

This, in essence, shows that the Police Force is at the centre of preventing crime, ensuring security of lives and property as well as maintenance of law and order in the society. Nevertheless, contrary to popular and reasonable expectations, the police in Nigeria have been seriously implicated in crimes, including corruption, which has affected their capacity to prevent crime and protect lives and property. Similarly, they have also been used by those in power for largely negative purposes such the oppression and repression of opposition figures and suppression of civil liberties (Heywood, 1997:365). These developments led Heywood (1997:370) to conclude that rather than be the solution to Nigeria’s national security, development and integration problems, the police has compounded and perpetuated them. This situation has allowed crimes to proliferate in Nigeria.

Although crimes are not the exclusive preserve of Nigeria, in the sense that they are common features of life in many parts of the world. However, in Nigeria, public impression is mostly that criminals are invincible (Isumonah, 2016). This is because any who has had a complaint to bring to the police often goes away with the impression that criminals will or can get away with their crimes. This impression has been severally proven to be true of high profile politically motivated murders, which require the political will of the minders of the state to investigate, expose and punish. But, even the petty non-political complaints are treated with levity, further eroding public trust and confidence in the police. This general attitude fosters and perpetuates criminal behaviour and preventable crimes because criminals are assured that they will not be exposed and brought to book (Isumonah, 2016).

Yet to say that Nigerians’ perception of the Police is only about lack of capacity to investigate and punish crimes is to grossly underestimate the problem. Indeed, if one probes deeper, the impression one gets is that the Nigerian Police is not only an institution that is incapable of checking crime, but also itself an enabler and vector of violence, criminality and corruption. It is a known fact that policemen in Nigeria, either acting alone or in concert with outsiders, routinely engage in several forms of corrupt practices. These include extortion, bribery, electoral malpractices, diversion and embezzle of public (police) funds or properties (Isima and Chukwuma, 2010: p.vii; Ladapo, 2011; Eneweremadu, 2006; Aremu, 2007). Apart from corruption, members of the Nigerian police force have also been widely implicated in other criminal malfeasances, among which are illegal detention, torture, extra judicial killings, rape, armed robbery, all of which compromise the security of the entire society in the sense of constituting a threat to the lives and properties of the citizen or the security of the state.



Exposure of corruption and corrupt practices are within the ambit of the Nigerian Criminal Justice System which includes the police, the judiciary and the prison service. The police are in the forefront of detecting and apprehending culprits including suspects, and arraigning them in the courts if they are convinced of their culpability. These powers derive from the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria 1999, as well as Section 4 of the Police Act CAP 359 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990, which we cited earlier (*Police Act CAP 359:4*). Unfortunately, the same police who are constitutionally charged with the responsibility of checking corruption and other forms of crimes have themselves been found to be neck-deep in corrupt practices. Many persons refer to them as initiators and practitioners of corruption (Uhakeme, 2009). The irony of an organization set up to enforce the law turning into a criminal organization was succinctly captured in a 2009 report by the Centre for Environment, Human Rights and Development (CEHRD) which observed that:

*By virtue of section 214 (1) of the 1999 constitution and section 3 of the Police Act, the Nigeria police is supposed to maintain law and order, protect lives and property throughout the country, but the police is a problem in this society. They are the worst violators of the law, they receive bribe from poor citizens and residents at gunpoint, frame up people, kill and commit other atrocities (CEHRD, 2009:ix)*

But, unlike other forms of crimes involving member of the force, police corruption, and particularly its effect on public security, has received very little scholarly or policy attention. This is in spite of the extensive scope of such corrupt practices and substantial evidences of a link between police corruption and the deteriorating security situation in the country as daily being reported by the media. This suggests that there is an urgent need to interrogate police corruption in Nigeria. Why is corruption such a pervasive phenomenon among Nigerian police men and women? What types or forms of corrupt practices are more commonly associated with Nigerian police officers? In what specific ways do they interact with and affect internal security in Nigeria? What anti-corruption measures are needed or are more likely to help produce a more honest police force, and by extension a more secure society? This article, which relies on secondary data (newspaper articles, books, journal articles and official publications) and a few primary data sourced from a questionnaire administered to a purposively selected group of stakeholders (police officer, legal practitioners private and commercial vehicle owners) in Ibadan in south-west Nigeria was, therefore, undertaken to review the major forms of corrupt practices perpetrated by members of the Nigerian Police Force, their causes and effects on internal security.

The article is organized in five sections including this introduction which is the first. The second section contains conceptual clarification of the two key terms used in this study, namely corruption and internal security. In the third section, we provide a theoretical framework which explains the origin and causes for the prevailing levels of corruption within the police in Nigeria. The fourth section examines the extensive nature and dimensions of corruption in the police and their negative effect on public security in Nigeria. The fifth section will offer some concluding remarks, including some recommendations for reforms.



## Conceptualising Corruption and Internal Security

Two concepts are central in the analysis presented in this article. They are corruption and internal security. This sections provides a clarification of the two terms.

### **Corruption**

Corruption pervades all strata of society, from the highest levels of the political and business elites to the ordinary person in the village. However, there are divergent opinions on what really constitutes corruption just as is commonly the case with other concepts in the social sciences. Indeed, its definition now become, according to Akindele (2005), ideologically, morally, culturally, politically and intellectually elusive to the point of losing sight of its detrimental and parasitic influence on people and the society at large. Divindi, citing Aluko(2002), argued that corruption includes several wrong behaviour such as nepotism, favouritism, bribery, graft and other unfair means adopted by government employees and the public alike to extract some socially and legally prohibited favours. In the word of Akinyemi (2004), corruption is the acquisition of that which one (as a member of society not public official alone) is not entitled. Doig (2009) described corruption as the use of official positions, resources or facilities for personal benefit, or possible conflict of interest between public position and private benefit. This, of course, to him involves offenses of misconduct in public offices, which are usually covered by a variety of internal regulations.

Certainly, constructing an acceptable definition of corruption is a task that has attracted considerable attention of many people, including not only scholars, but international institutions, policymakers and even street people. Yet, despite their efforts, the search for a clear and universally acceptable definition of the phenomenon has remained elusive. This problem can be attributed to the fact that corruption is, on the one hand, complex word that represents a wide array of illegal and unacceptable behaviours, and on the other, to the fact that it is a concept whose uses is largely culturally specific. A careful review of existing scholarly literature, however, shows that there are three basic types or model of definitions on corruption across the world. These are discussed below.

#### (a)The Public Office Centred Definitions

The definitions linked to the notion of public service and behaviours that regulates its operations are reflected in the writings of Bayley (1966), Myrdal (1968; 2008); Nye (1967, 2008), etc. Generally they place emphasis on the abuse of trust and power with respect to the exercise of public office, in a manner that is aimed at attracting illegal personal benefits which may not necessarily be material in nature.

#### (b)Market Centred Definitions

This second set of definitions are traceable to the works of scholars like Kluveren (2008), and several others. In brief, they emphasise the conversion of public office or positions into an enterprise for the maximization of income, almost similar to the way in which an entrepreneur will seek to maximise profits from his investments. According to Kluveren (2008:), 'a corrupt civil servant regards his public office as a business, the income of which he will...seek to maximize. The office then becomes a – maximizing unit. The size of his income depends...upon the market situation and his talents for finding the points of maximal gain on the public's demand curve' (cited in *Heidenheimer and Johnston, 2008*).



(c). Public-Interest Centred Definitions

This set of definitions as stressed in the works of authors like Friedrich (cited in *Heidenheimer and Johnston, 2008:15*), Etzioni- Halevy (1984), Kempe (2000) etc, and link corruption to the concept of public interest. Within this framework, Friedrich (cited in *Heidenheimer and Johnston, 2008:7:15*) defines corruption as: '*a kind of behaviour which deviates from the norm actually prevalent or believed to be prevalent in a given context, such as the political*'. Similarly, Kempe (2000:18) views corruption as: 'the utilization of official positions or titles for personal or private gain, either on an individual or collective basis, at the expense of the public good, in violation of established rules and ethical considerations, and through the direct or indirect participation of one or more public officials, whether they be politicians or bureaucrats'.

These three types of definitions contain each within them their own shortcomings or limitations. For instance, all three consider corruption as more or less a public sector based phenomenon, whereas, corruption do also occur in the private sector. Similarly, the second set of definitions, that is the Market Centred Definitions, creates the wrong impression that corruption involves purely economic or financial gain. In reality however, corruption may involve other benefits that are non-material. One can therefore combine and integrate them in order to arrive at a more inclusive, exhaustive and useful definitional framework which gives a clearer picture of the concept we are seeking to define. One of such comprehensive definitions which comes to mind is the one offered by Khan (1996). According to him, corruption may be seen as: '*any act which deviates from the rules of conduct, including normative values, governing the actions of someone in a position of authority or trust, whether in the private or public domain, because of private-regarding motives (that is non-public or general), such as wealth, power, status, etc (1996:1)*'.

If we adopt this definition, an act or behaviour can only be termed corrupt if it meets all of the three following conditions:

- i. The act involves an individual holding a position of authority or trust irrespective of the domain (public or private)
- ii. The act or behaviour in question violets laws, regulations, including norms and values
- iii. The act or behaviour is committed using the office or position and intentionally with the aim of advancing some non-public goals which may or may not be material in nature

If this definition is adopted, acts such as bribery, extortion, embezzlement of funds and diversion of public property, fraud, nepotism, electoral malpractices, examination malpractices etc., can be termed corruption. However in this article, our analysis will be limited only to a particular variant of corruption which we termed 'police corruption' which is here defined as those corrupt practices that are perpetrated by police officers. These will involve a situation where police personnel use their position of authority for non-public benefit. The term 'police corruption' as used here will include such practices as commonly associated with the police like: unauthorised violence and brutality; fabrication and destruction of evidence; favouritism or nepotism; bribery and extortion, embezzlement of funds or diversion of public property, and electoral malpractices. The last three are particularly very common in contemporary Nigeria. However one must note that acts which we label *police corruption* are not necessarily committed by police officers alone. They are referred to as police corruption in so far as they are carried out by them in a



given context either acting alone or in connivance with outsiders. A number of dimensions have also been mentioned in attempting to determine what constitutes police corruption. Sayed and Bruce note that corrupt behaviour can include the “Blue Glue” dimension – covering up or protecting colleagues - as well as behaviour which is specifically designed not to offend businesses or politicians (1998, 4). Kleinig (2002, 288) differentiates between “process corruption” and “noble cause corruption,” and argues that “the pragmatics of policing foster situations of genuine moral ambiguity.”

### **Internal Security**

Along with food and shelter, security constitute the most essentially of all man’s needs. According to social contract theorists, security need was the basis of the social contract between the people and the state (which gave rise to the state or government), in which people willingly surrendered their rights to an organ (government) who oversees the survival of all. In this light security embodies the mechanism put in place to avoid, prevent, reduce, or resolve violent conflicts, and threats that originate from other states, non-state actors, or structural socio-political and economic conditions (Stan, 2004). For decades, issues relating to security were on the front burner in the development discourse. Several attempts have been made since the cold war ended to redefine the concept of security from a state-centric perspective to a broader view that places premium on individuals, in which human security that embodies elements of national security, human rights and national development remain major barometer for explaining the concept. At the heart of this debate there have been attempts to deepen and widen the concept of security from the level of the states to societies and individuals, and from military to non-military issues (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013; Krahmman, 2003).

Some scholars in conceptualizing security placed emphasis on the absence of threats to peace, stability, national cohesion, political and socio-economic objectives of a country (Igbuzor, 2011; Oche, 2001; Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013). Thus there is a general consensus in the contemporary literature that security is vital for national cohesion, peace and sustainable development. It is therefore apparent that national security is a desideratum, *sine qua non* for economic growth and development of any country (Oladeji and Folorunso, 2007). In the intelligence community there is a consensus that security is not the absence of threats or security issues, but the existence of a robust mechanism to respond proactively to the challenges posed by these threats with expediency, expertise, and in real time.

The opposite of security is insecurity. The concept of insecurity connotes different meanings such as: absence of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; lack of protection, and lack of safety. According to Beland (2005) insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpan-Robaro (2013) define insecurity from two perspectives. Firstly, insecurity is the state of being open or subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury. Secondly insecurity is the state of being exposed to risk or anxiety, where anxiety is a vague unpleasant emotion that is experienced in anticipation of some misfortune. These definitions of insecurity underscore a major point that those affected by insecurity are not only uncertain or unaware of what would happen but they are also vulnerable to the threats and dangers when they occur.

Security can be further classified into two: internal security and external security. The first relates to threats emanating from within the territory of a state, while the second



concerns threat from outside the shores of a country. Generally the police is charged with the task of assuring internal security, while the military take charges of issues relating to external security. A field survey conducted by Nwagboso (2015) revealed that Nigeria faces serious internal security problems which impact negatively on the economy of the Nigerian State and statehood. These internal security problems that may have impacted negatively on the statehood include kidnapping, militancy and terrorism mainly linked to the Boko Haram. All cases involve armed groups challenging the legal authority of the state with reference to protection of lives and property of the citizens, considering that the primary duty of the state is to protect lives and property of the citizens. The mechanism for achieving this lofty objective by state is through effective law enforcement agency which the police represents. However, available evidence shows that the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) has been incapacitated in tackling the increasing rate of internal security problems in Nigeria, especially in recent years. This has led to a situation where the Nigerian Army, who ordinarily is an institution which is expected to protect the nation from external aggression, has now been increasingly involved in ensuring internal security in the nation.

Several reasons have been given for the incapacity of the police to respond effectively to security situation. According to the Police Public Relations Department (PPRD), they include challenges relating to recruitment, training, and indiscipline. The Force, according to PPRD, also lacks expertise in specialized fields, and more importantly is challenged with corruption and dishonesty among its rank and file. These, according to them, engender low level public confidence on the institution. Thus, crime prevention, detention and investigation are compounded by failure of the public to report crimes accurately to the police (Nigerian Police Watch, 2011). Indeed, the people at any situation of sighting the police, brew in their heart in thought of how to escape from the hand of those who are supposed to be the keeper of the society. Today, the popular perception among many Nigerians is that the police force has failed to fulfil its role as “guardians” of society (Alemika, 1988; Hills, 2008, p.216; HRW,2010; Oluwaniyi, 2011; Ladapo, O. A. (2011). Alemika (1988) submitted that the legacy of the Nigeria Police Force is that of corruption, arbitrariness, ruthlessness, brutality, vandalism, incivility, low accountability to the public and corruption (p.161). But before going to discuss how corruption among the police contributes to the general atmosphere of internal insecurity in Nigeria, we will first highlight the scope and dimensions of police corruption. We shall do this, by resting on a review of existing literature. .

### **Police Corruption in Nigeria: Review of Literature**

Despite its pervasive and damaging nature, the issue of police corruption have not received sufficient attention of scholars. However, a brief review of what has been written on it so far still gives an illuminating picture of the extent and dimensions of this phenomenon.

On the extent of corruption among Nigerian police officers, Osayande (2001) cited in Adegoke (2014), postulated that, in Nigeria, the Police have been maligned, battered and dismembered. The Police have been polluted to such an extent that the force require a complete surgical operation and dialysis. He identified that the Police cannot carry out their functions properly due to the shortage of manpower, mobility in the performance of their duties and communication facilities. Oluyinini (2005), cited in Adegoke (2014), averred that what is even more worrisome is that, rather than evoke confidence and hope in the public, the appearance of policemen often conjures up a depressing picture of fear



and mistrust. This is in line with the submission of Kehinde (2005) and Adediran (2009) that in the Nigeria Police force, corruption is known to have grown from a humble beginning, when the force had little supplies of stationeries which contributed to posting of some officers to solicit for assistance from the public which gradually led to a sustained behaviour of begging within the police force. Aremu considered it a pandemic requiring urgent and innovative method to wipe out (Aremu, 2007). In another study undertaken with two other researcher, he suggested a self-efficacy counselling as a bottom-up approach for reducing police attitude to corruption in Nigeria (Aremu, Pakes and Johnston (2009).

Othman (2012) on the one hand posits that there is a link between corruption and social diversity, ethnic fractionalization, and religious differences. A culture of selfishness and greed breeds corruption, the manifestation of which negatively impacts the leaders and followers decision to engage in corrupt practices. The political system and the Nigeria's many diverse cultures could make the police leaders and their subordinates to compromise and be more susceptible to corrupt practices. There is a popular norm within the Nigerian society commonly referred to as —chop-I-chop which has become acceptable in many organizations in the country. This term coined by political leaders, especially during the regime of Ibrahim Babangida (1985-1993) – popularly referred to as —evil genius, has crept into the police institution. Orole (2013) conducted research on transformational leadership and perception of corruption within the Nigeria Police Force in 2013. According to his findings, 2 out of 5 of the respondents (police officers) believe it is wrong to engage in bribery. Yet, almost all of the respondents (4 out of 5) participate in one kind of corrupt practices or the other. Many of the respondents believe that it is acceptable to use their positions to solicit for bribe. So, it has become a —dignified and glorified practice among the police force to engage in corruption. Worst still, most of these practices go unchecked by the leaders who themselves, directly or indirectly, engage in gross misconduct.

Still on the same issue, a study conducted by Daniel (2001) has shown that police corruption exists in large scale in Nigeria and tends to greatly undermine national security. To an average Nigerian, the most corrupt organisation in the country today is the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). What with the horde of policemen, mostly the rank and file (comprising constables, corporals, sergeants and inspectors), who daily troop to the highways to collect illegal tolls, derisively referred to as *egunje* or *Green boy* (N20) (Ibid.)

Apart from bribe taking and extortion, electoral malpractices constitute a second most common dimension of police corruption covered in the literature. The most frequent cited allegations of police electoral misconduct include partisanship and discrimination against the opposition party; functional ineffectiveness to prevent and contain electoral crime; and complicity in fraud through brutality , intimidation, vote snatching, among others (ERC Report, 2008:174) . Several researches have documented cases when the police headquarters issued specific instructions to all State Commands that its officers and men should ensure the success of a particular party, usually the ruling party, in elections (Ayoala, 2004: 1-2). The report of the European Commission Election Observation Mission (2007) also emphasised various dimensions of police electoral misconduct: arbitrary arrest and detention of opposition supporters before and during elections by the police, without charges; banning of rallies and campaigns mounted by the opposition; and flagrant impunity of violations committed by the members of the ruling party (Isima, 2010: 19).



The third form or dimension of corrupt practices common among police officer is diversion and embezzlement of public funds or properties. This happens to be the least reported form or dimension of corrupt practices common among policemen. Aside media report, relatively few studies have been done on this form of corruption which happens to be the exclusive preserve of senior police officers. Few examples report will suffice.

The first one occurred in early 2005, when the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Nigeria's major anti-graft agency announced that almost 18 billion naira and several choice properties have been recovered from the former Inspector General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun. The 18 billion came from cash lodged in different banks within the country. On 4 April 2005, Mr. Balogun was arraigned at the Federal High Court, [Abuja](#) on charges involving about N13 billion obtained through money laundering, theft and other sources. These offences allegedly took place between 2002 to 2004, when Mr Balogun presided as Inspector General of the Nigerian Police Force. In the end, Mr. Balogun entered into a plea bargain with the court which jailed him for six months, in exchange for returning much of the property and money (Enweremadu, 2006: 329).

The second case occurred in 2012, when a probe by the Nigerian Senate uncovered the mismanagement of the police pension funds involving several billions of Naira. The incident revealed how some officials of the Police Pension Board, aided and abated by some corrupt police officers, falsified documents to withdraw N24 billion from the budget office for the payment of pension that required only N3.5 billion (Eme, 2014). According to media reports, some of the accused officials were subsequently arraigned by the (EFCC) before an Abuja high court on an 18-count charge of conspiracy, breach of trust and embezzlement of N32.8 billion police pension funds. One of the accused, a former director in the Police Pension Office, was also sentenced to two years in prison with an option of N250, 000 fine on each of the three counts (<http://www.antigrift.org/cc-case/pension-funds-theft-n32bn-police-pension-fund>).

The forgoing analysis show that the issue of corrupt practices involving Nigerian police offers has been extensively covered by the literature, especially its nature, causes and scale. However, the same cannot be said of the link between police corruption and public security. That area has so far received only very scant scholarly attention. This is in spite of the extensive media reportage of this phenomenon and an overwhelming evidence of deteriorating security situation in the country.

One of the few studies that have tried to demonstrate how police corruption directly contributes to insecurity in Nigeria is Ochoche (1998). According to Ochoche, the police in Nigeria, like in some other African countries, has not been able to maintain internal security, defend the national interest nor uphold the protection of lives and property of the citizens. One of the major reasons why this is so, is because they have mainly upheld regime and personal security in the form of corruption and criminality Ochoche (1998:113). Luckham (1998:12-13) holds that in a very fundamental sense national security is a public good and not the private property of the state nor of particular dominant interests. According to Luckham (1998:13), there can exist a tension or contradiction between the manifest and latent functions of security. This is especially the case where the police are employed as an instrument of state coercion to oppress, exploit, extort and terrorize the citizenry. A study carried out by Nte (2011) also argue that there is some correlation



between police corruption and national security. The Police appears to show loyalty to the government of the day and forget so quickly it is an institution meant to serve the nation at large. When such an institution as the police become political tool then the security of the nation is at risk. Nte therefore concludes that insecurity cannot be combated without attention drawn to ensure a responsible and efficient police force. This study was carried out to provide empirical evidence to substantiate the claims of these group of scholars, whose arguments, although faultless, were largely theoretical.

### **The Impact of Police Corruption on Security in Nigeria**

As already noted, the police are in the forefront of detecting and apprehending criminals, including individuals suspected of engaging in corrupt practices, and arraigning them in the courts if they are convinced of their culpability. However, these same institution has become widely involved in the same practices. This study seeks to address three principal research questions namely what are is the nature or extent of corrupt practices among Nigeria police men and women? What are the main courses of corruption within the Nigerian police and how does police corruption impact on the levels of internal insecurity in Nigeria. The first question has been adequately death with in the previous section of this article. This section will therefore concern itself with finding answers to the last two questions.

In order to address those two questions, the study included a survey research method, which allowed us to collect some primary data directly from the members of the public who interact daily with the police. The method of data collection here was through the use of the instrument of questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to a randomly selected sample of the target population comprising two hundred (200) respondents from two major local government areas of Oyo State, namely, Ibadan North and Ibadan North East. These local government areas constitute the main business community in the state with relatively heavy police presence. Due to limited time, only 150 questionnaires were eventually distributed out of which 112 were successfully completed and returned. The questionnaire sought information on questions that were relevant to the causes of corrupt practices among Nigerian policemen and the challenges such behaviours pose to insecurity in the country. The responses gotten are presented and analysed under two sub-headings below, with the help of tables which contains the summary of the major findings.

The first part of the questionnaire solicited information bordering on the personal bio-data of the sample which closely approximates the target population. This included civil servants, private sector workers and students (see table 1).

Table 1: Respondents Bio-Data  
**OCCUPATION**

	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
Civil Servant	39	38.2
Private workers	33	32.0
Students	31	30.1
Total	103	100

<b>AGE</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
10-20	13	11.6
20-30	42	37.5
31-40	40	35.7
41-50	13	11.6
Above 50	4	3.6
Total	112	100

<b>LENGTH OF RESIDENCY</b>	<b>REQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE (%)</b>
1-10 yrs.	57	55.3
10-20 yrs.	20	19.4
20-30 yrs.	12	11.7
Above 30 yrs.	14	13.6
Total	103	100

**Source: Ibitoye O. V. (2016).**

The table presented above shows a relative balance in the sex distribution of respondents. The table reveals that 46.4% of the total respondents are male while the remaining 53.6% are female. As for the educational status of the respondents, 69.6% of the respondents are university or Polytechnic graduate, 18.8% are college graduate, 9.8% are secondary school certificate holders, while Primary school certificate holders and persons without formal education constitute 0.9% each. Respondent's occupational distribution is divided along the three strata mentioned earlier. 38.2% of the respondents are civil servants, while 32.0% are workers in private enterprises. Amongst the respondents also are students who make up 20.1% of the total respondents. The age distribution of the respondents were also noted. As the table 1 shows, 37.5% of the total respondents fall between the age 20 and 30, 35.7% fall between age 31 and 40, while 11.6% fall between 41 and 50. 3.6% were people who were above 50 years of age. Length of residency shows how long respondents have resided in their various local government within the state. 55.3% of the total respondents have resided in Oyo state for 1-10 years, 19.4% have resided for 10-20 years, 11.7% have resided for 20-30 years, while 13.6% of the total respondents have resided in Oyo state for over 30 years.

As we have argued in the earlier sections of this article, the level of corruption in the Nigerian police is very serious and the causes are attributable to different factors. To find out the most common causes five affirmative statements were put forward before our respondents and their responses were indeed instructive.

**Table 2: Respondents view on Causes of Police Corruption**

S/N	Causes of police corruption in Nigeria	SA	A	D	SD
1	The occurrence of corruption within the police force is very rampant	69 (61.6%)	39 (34.8%)	3 (2.7%)	1 (0.9%)
3	Low level of professionalism has led to police corruption	47 (42%)	45 (40.2%)	17 (15.2%)	3 (2.6%)
4	Police corruption has been fuelled by Political class interference	46 (41.1%)	52 (46.4%)	13 (11.6%)	1 (0.9%)
5	Inadequate/Irregular salary has increased police corruption	28 (25%)	35 (31.3%)	33 (29.5%)	16 (14.3%)

Source: Ibitoye O. V. (2016).

Although the key objective was to establish the causes of corruption among Nigerian police officers, the first statement put to the respondents, as shown above, first attempted to solicit the views of the respondents as per the level of corruption within the police force as agency of government saddled with the responsibility of internal security in the country. The responses show that majority of the respondents (98.2%) believe there is corruption within the police force and these corrupt acts are very rampant. The next three research questions that followed then sought to find out the major causes of corruption within the force. In other words, the respondents view on the factors responsible for police corruption. In their responses, majority of the respondents agree that inadequate or irregular salary (63%), low level of professionalism (84%) and political class interference (87.5%) is responsible for the incidences of corruption within the force. In other words, the most important causes of corruption within the Nigerian police force are political interference, poor level of professionalism and inadequate remuneration, in that order.

**Table 3: Respondents view on the Impact of Corruption on Internal security**

S/N	Effects of police corruption on the society	SA	A	D	SD
1	Police corruption has led to the loss of many lives	67 (59.8%)	42 (37.5%)	3 (2.7%)	-
2	I feel safe to report cases to the police	13 (11.6%)	19 (17.0%)	55 (49.1%)	25 (22.3%)
3	The Police can ensure maintenance of law and order	16 (14.3%)	48 (42.9%)	33 (29.5%)	15 (13.4%)

Source: Ibitoye O. V. (2016).

As already noted also, previous researches showed that corruption within the Nigerian police force has gotten so deep that its effects has manifested in different forms, including internal insecurity. What was lacking was specific and sufficient empirical data to support such claims. This study provides some of such data. Thus, three areas of possible effect of police corruption was interrogated through three specific questions contained in our questionnaire.

The first one probed the effects of police corruption on their role of maintenance of order in the society (apprehend and punish lawbreakers). From the responses received only 57% agreed that The Nigerian Police has the capacity to ensure the maintenance of law and order, whereas a sizeable number (43%) felt that the Police lacks the capacity to ensure maintenance of law and order. Although it should be noted that corruption is not the only explanation for the limited capacity of the police in this regard. For instance, the study also discovered the Nigeria Police that is closest to the people is apparently under staffed. In a country of over 170million people, the police staff strength is about 371,800.



This is an average of one policeman to about 457 persons. This number which is hardly enough to ensure security for a country the size of Nigeria, and is also far below global standard, leaves the citizens vulnerable.

The second question probed the effects of police corruption on public trust or confidence in the police as measured by the willingness of citizens to report suspected cases of crime to the police, which will ultimately enhance their role of maintenance of order and security in the society. On this issue, the result from our data analysis points to a high level of distrust between the people and the police, with 71.4% of the respondents admitting that they don't feel safe to report any case to the police due to fear of being charged for what they know nothing of or being extorted in the process. Giving that the agency responsible for the maintenance of order within the country has lost credibility before those they are expected to safeguard, security of the people becomes a spiritual pursuit where the citizens retire to trusting the invisible to protect them.

Finally, the third question probed the effects of police corruption on the loss of lives of members of the public. Here an overwhelming majority of our respondents (97.3%) affirmed that indeed Police corruption has been responsible for the loss of many lives. This occurs, for instance, when police many are distracted by corruption or deliberately ignore their role in providing security after receiving gratification leading to loss of lives and property (Chinwokwu, 2013, Olumuyiwa, Egbedina, Popoola and Lawal, 2014). In some cases, police officers themselves murder members of the public who resist extortion or refuse to offer bribes (Idio, 2016), or even shoot in order to rob their victims of their belongings (Hanafi, 2016).



## Conclusion

Despite been dotted by several law enforcement agencies, Nigeria has witnessed a rising wave of internal security challenges in recent times. This situation has been blamed on many institutional inadequacies found within the security agencies, notably corruption. This study thus attempted to examine the impact of corruption on internal security focusing on the Nigerian Police which is the primary agency for the maintenance of internal security. The study found that, although the Police Force is the preeminent public institution established to assure the security of lives and property within the country, the institution has ironically functioned more as an enabler of corruption and insecurity.

The study reveals three major ways in which corruption in the police force have undermined internal security. The first is through declining capacity to ensure maintenance of law and order which occur because police officers are distracted by corrupt practices or look the other way after receiving inducement by criminally minded individuals. The second is through direct loss of lives or properties of members of public orchestrated by police officers against citizens who resist extortion. The third is through the unwillingness of citizens to report suspected cases of crime to the police because of their mistrust for the police, which will ultimately erodes their role of maintenance of order in the society. The study identifies several factors that are responsible for the manifestation of corruption in Nigeria police, and by extension high level of internal insecurity in the country. This include the misuse of the police by the political class, poor welfare packages, low level of professionalism and understaffing.

To strengthen the police force and boost to security within the nation the study offers the following recommendations. First, the government should recruit more manpower to ensure a representative police force, while providing adequate logistics and improve welfare packages that will contribute to the effective and efficiency delivery of the Police Service. Secondly, the Police should be allowed to act in the independent capacity as is done in developed countries. This means the Police should be shielded from political interference and 'politically motivated appointments'. The role of law enforcement in any civilized society is to serve and protect the citizens. Political appointments will end up making the officer subject to the whims and caprices of the government of the day, thereby undermining his duty to the nation. This is a major obstacle to police effectiveness in Nigeria and must be discouraged at all cost if improved police performance must be achieved. Thirdly, study also recommends community policing as a way to ensure accountability of the police officers. When the policing is reduced to community level, those who misbehave are easily held accountable within the society and forced to discharge their duty. Finally, there should also be an independent body to check the excesses of the Police Force and assure her prompt responses to security issues.

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