

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE ORIGIN AND EFFECTS OF POLICE-  
CIVILIAN FACEOFF IN NIGERIA THROUGH A SYSTEMATIC  
ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURE AND OPERATIONS OF IMPERIAL  
POLICING IN NIGERIA, 1861-1970.**

By

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**Abstract**

This paper explores the origin, causes, manifestations, nature, and effect of police-civilian faceoff in the internal security of Nigeria focusing on imperial policing of Nigeria in 1861-1970. Imperial policing started in 1861 when Mc Caskey, colonial administrator of Lagos established a Consular Guard of 30 men. The paper deployed historical and analytical methods, with primary and secondary sources to achieve its aim. This study aims to reposition the Nigerian police force through the restoration of dignity and respect by ensuring that the conduct of police operations respects and protects the rights of the citizens of the country. Findings from the research show that policing agents in Nigeria of all ages were not insulated from partisanship and political control. The paper recommends training and retraining program; overhaul of the community policing approach; improved police-public relations, implementation of home-made adaptive strategies to police-civilian faceoff, image building; and removal of all vestiges of colonial legacy from policing.

**Keywords:** Cynicism, Colonial Legacy, Policing Model, Police-Public Relations, Image Building.

## **Introduction**

This study explains the foundation of modern policing in Nigeria, the colonial origin of police brutality and human rights abuse that have come to stay in modern Nigeria; the colonial origin of a crisis of alienation in the police and public that led to the unhappiness of officers which resulted in brutality and cynicism. This study explains the causes and manifestations of police-civilian face-off; the decolonisation of police without structural reform and proper training of the new leaders or managers of the Nigeria police; the politicisation of the police and politics of police control in the 1960s.

The theoretical framework that guides analysis in this study is the Social Contract Theory (SCT) which says that police services are provided in exchange for public trust and protection. According to Meta AI (2024), the theory states that individuals voluntarily surrender some personal freedoms to a governing authority (police) in exchange for protection, security, and social order. This theoretical framework has shaped Western philosophy, influencing modern democracy and governance. Key proponents of this theory are: Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*, 1651); John Locke (*Two Treatises of Government*, 1689); Jean-Jacques Rousseau (*The Social Contract*, 1762); and Immanuel Kant (*Metaphysics of Morals*, 1797).

The researcher explains the topic based on the core principles of the social contract theory which includes: legitimacy- by saying that the police derive legitimacy from the consent of members of the public; citizens implicitly or explicitly consent to the social contract; rule of law- government establishes laws to maintain social order; protection and security- government through the police and military protects from internal and external threats; social contract- individuals voluntarily cooperate, supports and surrender/volunteer some freedom/information to police which is a governing authority; and state of nature- humans exist in a hypothetical pre-social state, characterized by chaos, insecurity and self-interest, hence the need for the public-police partnership and relations.

Influence of the theory on Police-Civilian Relations: legitimacy- police derive legitimacy from public consent; accountability- police are accountable to the public; community engagement- police engage with communities to maintain trust; and protection/ security- police provide protection and security. The strength of the theory is that it provides a framework for maintaining social order and stability and argues that citizens can hold the government (police) accountable for the breakdown of law and order, human rights violations and illegitimate policing/governance. The weakness of the theory is that it assumes all individuals consent to the plan; it ignores power dynamics- and overlooks unequal power relationships; it is rooted in Western philosophical tradition which makes it culturally/ historically limited. Lastly, difficulty in withdrawal: citizens may face challenges withdrawing from the contract.

Critics of the theory such as critique of liberalism argue that it is overly individualistic. Postcolonial and feminist critiques argue that it ignores historical power

imbalances. Globalisation and cosmopolitanism critics argue that this theory faces challenges from populism, nationalism and authoritarianism (Meta AI, 2024).

### **The Background of the Study**

Colonialism produced a brutal and uncivil police force with poor human rights credentials. Agboga (2020, p.2) citing Kohli (2004) posits that the British colonial administrators in Nigeria unlike Japan and South Korea, made no effort to introduce developmental institutions and incited the coming to power of cynic (self-seeking indigenous) elites. In other to cut the cost of administration, Britain left the legacy of a weak civil bureaucracy a poorly trained decentralised police force and the public unwilling to cooperate.

A key milestone and development in police-civilian relations in the past was the establishment of local police forces to help bridge the communication gap between police and the communities where they serve. This was done through decree No.4, of 1916 and 1925 which was enforced in 1930. However, the purpose of that establishment was defeated when the local police forces became politicized and corrupt which led to her disbandment in 1968.

What justifies this study is the clear gap in scholarship on the historical perspective of the study of police-public relations in Nigeria. An integrated discussion on the colonial origin of police-civilian faceoff in Nigeria has not received adequate attention. Hence, the historian delves into the past, utilising oral evidence and archival sources to investigate the challenges and principles of police-public relations in Nigeria.

Previous relevant pieces of literature on policing such as the works of Okeleke and Mordi (2024) discuss local policing in Nigeria, and outlined the reason for the establishment and disbandment of local policing but were silent on the issue of police-civilian face-off. However, the work was useful in the investigation of the colonial origin of police brutality. Again, Asenime's (2014) work on policing was useful in describing the evolution of modern police. However, the study was silent on salient issues in modern policing such as the issue of police-civilian face-off.

The research areas covered the origin of the Nigeria police, operations of an imperial police force; the use of police to violently suppress riots, protests, rebellion, tax defaulters, anti-people disposition; human rights abuse, brutality, corruption; cause and manifestation of police-civilian face-off, Nigeria in the colonial era up to the fall of the first republic. Forces that fuelled cynicism is not left out in this study.

Colonial policies overcame the existing indigenous policing order that existed among the various communities that formed present-day Nigeria and forcefully imposed the Western policing order. In the police colleges established in Ikeja, Enugu (1932) and Kaduna (1922) special attention is given to the physical/moral development of recruits and the promotion of team spirit (NAI, CSO 1937, p.8) to perform paramilitary duties to the neglect of public relation training. The crisis of alienation provided by the recruitment and training policies was encouraged in the colonial era. The imperial policing model was not only sustained by successive regimes but has serious implications for the effective

policing of Nigeria. Niyi's (2014, p.16) recommendation that education of the officers would improve performance and must be encouraged by police authorities. This affirms Zanna and Zems (2020, p.98) postulation that the connection of literacy to police performance and police-public relations.

### **The Origin of an imperial police force and the Nature of police-public Relations in the colonial era up to 1970.**

Afolabi, Lawanson and Oyinloye (2016, p.183) explain the origin of the Nigeria Police Force thus:

Before colonisation, the British colonial administrator named Mc Caskey through wars of conquest and territorial acquisition and expansion across Africa established local/ decentralised police forces. This started with the creation of a consular guard of 30 men for the Lagos colony in 1861. However, this became known as the Hausa Constabulary in 1879. Royal Niger Company went further to establish another constabulary in Lokoja in the year 1888, and in 1894, the Niger Coast Constabulary was formed in Calabar to police the Northern and Southern Protectorates respectively. More so, in 1896, Lagos police came to light. Next was the merger of the Royal Niger Company Constabulary and Niger Coast Constabulary into the Northern and Southern Nigeria Police respectively. The Northern and Southern Police Forces on April 1, 1930, merged to form the Nigeria Police Force with its headquarters located first in Lagos and later moved to Abuja for special reasons.

The 1960 constitution of Nigeria allowed the existence of regional police forces in Nigeria. The 1979 constitution of Nigeria abolished regional police forces. The Nigeria Police Act drawn from Nigeria Constitution fails to address the issue of corruption in the police. Niyi (2014, p.16) rightly states that "the twin evil of corruption and indiscipline have polluted all basic institutions of the Nigerian nation, affecting the formal organs of law and contaminating even the administration of justice". The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is staffed with about 380,000 to 400,000 men to police about 170 million people in the country (Afolabi, Lawanson and Oyinloye 2016:184).

Police-civilian faceoff in Nigeria started in the colonial era when in 1861 indigenes of Yoruba nations in the hinterlands from Lagos avoided and refused to support the Hausa Constabulary (police contingent) stationed in their communities by the British colonial administrator. In the period 1930 to 1950, native Nigerians and expatriates in the imperial police force supported the colonial state and helped mercantilist firms achieve their goals at the citizen's expense. Police-civilian faceoff manifests and could be seen in the way and manner they relate. There are countless cases of killings of police personnel on duty by indigenes; and unwillingness to divulge sensitive intelligent information to the police which could help in bursting operations. Police-civilian faceoff could be stopped, mitigated or managed by various means discussed in this study; for instance police image-building strategies. To this end, Inobemhe, Garba, Udeh and Santas (2020, p.128)

averred that Nigerian's are not new to the fact that police image was battered and they are all aware of the calls to image building of the police because a battered image benefits no one.

### **Factors and principles that sustained Nigeria's model of police-public relation.**

Police-public relations in Nigeria rests on five principles, namely:

1. Transparency- open communication and accountability.
2. Responsiveness- timely response to public concerns.
3. Fairness- impartial application of the law.
4. Respect – for human rights and dignity.
5. Community engagement- regular interactions and feedback.

Factors influencing police-public relations in Nigeria as outlined by Meta AI (n.d.) are:

1. Colonial legacy: historical mistrust and authoritarian policing.
2. Corruption: perceived or actual police corruption erodes trust. All police officers are members of the public service and at this time had embraced corruption. Ajomale(1957) in his work for the National Archives on Bribery and Corruption says

You who are joining the Public Service will do well to read the General Orders which deal with corruption in the service. These orders are Nos. 04202-04216, which are found in Chapter 4. You will see from these General Orders that some things which a private citizen can do are not permitted for Government servants

3. Inefficiency- inadequate resources and ineffective crime prevention.
4. Cultural diversity- understanding and respecting Nigeria's diverse cultures.
5. Socio-economic factors- poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

The key stakeholders in police-public relations in Nigeria are:

1. The Nigeria Police Force (NPF).
2. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).
3. Civil Society Organisation (CSO).
4. Community leaders.
5. Government agencies such as the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice and humanitarian affairs.

People began to undermine the police and focus on or relate better with other policing agents in the country. According to Afolabi et al (2016, p.185 citing Ogaga 2014) a weak police force guarantees no security for citizens and commands no respect from the citizens.

### **Home-made and Adaptive Strategies for Improvement of Police-Public Relations in Nigeria: Co-relating Police Image Building to Police-Public Relation**

The Nigeria Police Council and Police Service Commission are two organs that control the NPF established by the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. They could enforce the following strategies to achieve police image building in Nigeria: 1) engagement of community in policing through outreach programs, town hall meetings

and neighbourhood patrols; 2) provision of regular updates on police activities, investigations and policies to give rise to transparency; 3) improved communication with the public they serve by utilising social media, press releases and public information officers; 4) media relations- foster positive relationship with local print (traditional media handles) and electronic media (inclusive of social media handles) outlets; 5) employee recognition- acknowledge and reward officers and men of the force for exemplary service delivered; 6) training and retraining program to ensure continuous improvement with focus on diversity, cultural sensitivity, and de-escalation technique (Meta AI, 2024). This is because there is beauty in diversity, strength in number, and unity in the police organisations' drive for progress-making for nationhood

The effect of the colonial policing model on police-public relations cannot be set aside. Colonial policing model involves high visibility patrol, arrest and detention of crime suspects. Okeleke and Mordi (2024, p.39) posit that the more the patrol teams are visible to the public, the more confidence and cooperation they would enjoy with the citizens to make indigenes of the communities to provide sensitive security information that would aid the police in her bursting operations and trigger the citizens to seek the assistance of the police. Bayley and Shearing (2001, p.5) observed that the provision of security through physical constraints is an intrinsic and important government function which represents the core purpose of policing. This affirms the social contract theory. However, the government is recognised in part by the control of policing. Nigeria during our period of study had not more than 40,000 police operatives (interview, J. Aghanti. May 12, 2024). The police are known to represent and protect the effects of colonising power in the colonial era and represent/protect the interest of the ruling classes in the postcolonial era. Hence the saying that he who pays the piper dictates the tune of the music. Even though crime was experienced on a regular basis in the communities, police recklessness in handling crime led many Nigerians never to report crimes and offences to police. Instead, they adopt self-help approaches to crime or report to informal policing agents like hunters, vigilante groups and anti-cult volunteers. Every organisation has its own image regardless of whether it does anything about it or not (Zems, 2016).

### **The Resentment of Nigeria Police of all Ages Traced to Police Colonial History: The Need to Adopt Varied Strategies.**

Public resentment and hatred for police are traced to: the high-handedness with which imperial police force policed the communities in the colonial era; occasional over-use of legitimate/brute force in the era of transition to independence; bad temper, extra-judicial killings and human rights abuse in postcolonial era by few earing members of the Nigeria Police Force. Based on the principles of the social contract theory, government establishes laws and maintains social order. When a citizen breaks that law or order, the police go after them, apprehend and prosecute such citizen, fines are levied on an earing citizen. He/she forfeits some amount of money to secure a bail bond. The Inspector-General of Police (IGP) claims that fines levied under section 356 sub-section 2 of the criminal code are legitimate credits to the Police Reward Fund (NAI, Memo No.2229C,

November 1922). This includes fines inflicted on rioters in Warri in 1926, obstruction and assaults on police officers and many others. NPF became unified under the command of an IGP on April 1, 1930, with an office in force headquarters in Lagos (Police Handbook, 2019, pp.5-9). The widespread perception of police corruption is perpetuated by ongoing media coverage of abuses and citizen interactions involving bribery at traffic stops or during investigations (West Africa Pilot Vol. ii, No.422, Tuesday, April 18, 1939. Pp. 1 & 7).

### **An Estranged Police and Cynic Public are of the Same Coin: The Need to Adopt Varied Strategies.**

Allegations levied against police personnel such as claims of arbitrariness in exercising power, corruption, delays in the administration of justice, and pervasion of justice are products of godfatherism. Many highly placed public officers, civil and public servants and others in the criminal justice system pervert the course of justice due to their closeness to the seat of power. As rightly stated by Johnson (2013), when a police officer is sucked in, it results in unresolved crime and abandonment of cases making members of the public see police as being in secrete-service of selected criminal political godfathers on the issue of arbitrariness in policing, Okeleke and Mordi (2024, p.41) had a contrary view. The paper

captured that the arbitrariness of police was checked by police monitoring teams popularly known as Xsquad or mosquito in police circles; team or unit commanders as well as incident duty Senior Police Officers (SPOs). There has never been a time when room was given for arbitrariness in policing.

To professionalise the police force is to tackle corruption from the high echelon to the rank-and-file.

### **Why People Resist Nigeria Policemen**

1. Poor knowledge of the actual nature of Nigeria's policing model.
2. To protect the interest of beneficiaries of crimes and existing social order.
3. Anti-change ideologies and beliefs on police and policing.
4. Lack of willpower to drop familiar practices in favour of unfamiliar practices.

There is an erroneous assumption or generalisation foreshadowed by some scholars such as Ajayi, Alemika, Professor Okpevra, Asenime, Professor Tangban and Professor Olaniyi Rasheed that needs to be addressed. For instance, Afolabi et al (2016, pp. 191-192) citing Ajayi (2014) posit that.

Over the years, NPF failed to promote her public image. Countless cases of murder, assassination, and robbery took place in the society all of which lasted for two or more years; police failed to identify, arrest or prosecute the culprits, gangs or groups.

Evidence drawn from an investigation is opposed to that position. Findings indicate that the NPF policing method is responsive to complaints of crime.

### **Home-made and adaptive strategies for improvement of police-public relations in Nigeria.**

Efforts at image building saw the adoption of strategies such as crime prevention programs, public safety campaigns, social media engagements on Twitter and Facebook handles, press briefings and conferences by PRDNPF, awards and recognition of uncommon/ exceptional service delivery by policing agents and the public, community policing units stationed and posted in police formations nation-wide popularly known as special constabulary police (SCP), school resource officers and neighbourhood watch programs. To that effect, the police forces, instead of becoming an asset to the public, became an asset or a tool in the hands of managers of the country's economy. Afolabi et al (2016, p.201) believe that 'the civilian-police relationship has been known to be unfriendly, uncooperative, lacked confidence, accountability and transparency'. This calls for improvement in policing methods, police-public relations and equipment.

Late Kam-Salom, former IGP (1966–75) formally established the Public Relations Department of the Nigeria Police Force (PRDNPF) to perform social services to the public. On this note, an oral source affirms that it organises press briefings, parades arrested criminal suspects; issues periodicals (press releases and bulletins); drafts articles from IGPs lectures; publishes important photographs and advertisements regularly through the print and electronic media in a bid to systematically keep the public informed on police activities and programs. It also produces police yearly calendars, police diaries, police pocket notebooks, greeting cards, magazines and newsletters (interview, J. Aghanti May 12, 2024). The NPPRD is peopled by general duty police operatives. This is a home-made adaptive approach to the issue of police-civilian faceoff.

The police force is an agency whose duty is to ensure good conduct and peace in the society. To this end, police must key into these home-made adaptive strategies. The first on the list is detailed equipment holding for the new entrants into the force example, an order and directive from the police boss forbidding recruit-constables from carrying classified weapons like Assault Rifle (AR), Pump Action, AK47 rifles, Grenades, Beretta Pistol, FMC and others of that caliber. Secondly, there should be yearly recruitment of constables into the force to deal with the issue of acute shortage of manpower. Thirdly, setting out new operational standards like removing old and weak Patrol and Guard commanders (P&Gs) from roadwork and posting them into divisional crime branches or office work.

Fourth is to insulate the commissioned officers, senior police officers, inspectors, and rank-and-file of the Nigerian police from partisanship and political control. With this, credible election and investigation of election-related crimes/offences is possible. Five is reform of police training with emphasis on community policing, human rights-based policing and communication skills. The sixth point is an overhaul of the community policing approach to information gathering and improved police-public relations. This



entails the recruitment and training of more indigenes of the community to work with police as special constables. These Special Constabulary Police (SCP) volunteers do not face language difficulties and are familiar with the terrain, culture, customs and traditions of the community, have local knowledge of the community, know the people and are known by the people, could spot out criminals and report to police sensitive security information that would help in bursting operations.

Seven, the proper funding and supervision of police public relations department, public complaint bureau and police monitoring teams is another home-made adaptive strategy or solution. On this note, the researcher recommends improved resource allocation- an increase in funding for equipment, training, personnel and logistics. Public sensitisation program and seminars captioned “police-is-your-friend” should be organised by the police public relations unit to foster cordial relationships, and publication of police activities. Good governance, democratic practices, and poverty alleviation in the country to enhance police-public cooperation and partnerships. Involvement of the government at all levels in the funding of police operations is also necessary.

To Zanna and Zems (2020, p.102), ‘the popular term now is ‘democratic policing’. This term refers to an accountable police force which subjects itself to the rule of law; respects human right/ dignity; intrudes into citizen’s lives when invited by untoward circumstances’. The paper did not discuss the ‘certain limited circumstances’ however, this is not unconnected to intelligence-led policing and the performance of social services to members of the public on invitation or if the occasion warrants; this is the eight (8) home-made strategy to the issue of police-civilian faceoff.

In every intelligence-led policing approach, there must be law enforcement officer's partnership with community youths and elders as they engage each other in information sharing and proactive/timely response to crime, where intelligence serves as a guide to police operations and programs. Informative intelligence more often than not is retrieved from informants, crime suspects, analysis of existing crime records, covert surveillance, local sources or say from the community. All these sources must be scrutinised or analysed to enable the police to make decisions on policing tactics and more intelligence gathering/ crime prevention with greater precision (Zanna and Zems 2020, p.102).

An appraisal of the colonial policing model also revealed Nigeria’s homemade adaptive strategy on the issue of police-civilian faceoff. In this regard, Zems (2016) averred that police public relations is an instrument for the sustenance of relations between police and the public.

### **Considering Battered Police-Public Relation as a Product of Colonialism.**

In 1862, John Hawley Glover, the new administrator of the government of Lagos wrote among others:

One quarter of the town of Badagry is at this moment in open defiance of the authorities and the police and as soon as the mail has left, I hope to be able to proceed there to establish order. I am drilling

and arming thirty of the Hausa police and that is the only available force I can move out of Lagos in case such a force should be required within the territory.

This shows that public resentment and cynicism toward police started in the colonial era. Fraud, brutality and wars of conquest and territorial acquisition were fought by the British colonial administration with the use of constabulary police recruited, trained and equipped by them. As a territory is conquered, British presence is established by stationing a police force there to serve as an army of occupation. The policy of strangers policing strangers was a dominant policy then. Policemen drawn from Hausa Sierra-Leon slaves were used to police the country. This policy continued until 1950 when the decolonisation of NPF took place. The above arrangement of Glover J.H., shows that the imperial police force performed military duties as well as police duties (Adedipe 1965, p.v).

There are countless number of a detailed account of the use of imperial police to suppress workers strikes and youth restiveness. A good example of this is the worker's strike of 1945, 1947, and 1949; the women's riots of 1929 – 1930 and 1948; Kano community riot of 1953; and the Tiv riot of 1959 – 1960. All these led to loss of lives and property worth millions of pounds. This triggered suspicion, and hatred and battered public relations with the police (interview, S. Oyiboka, January 8, 2024). The Nigeria Police Standing Orders (NSPO 1932, page 45 and 93) spelt out the objectives of training thus:

Police training for recruit constables in the colleges centers on drills in order to instil obedience, discipline and self-control in the recruited constables. Officers and men of the police force must model their standards on those of the military infantry. This is because the Nigeria Police Force is however, a semi-military organisation... it is imperative that all recruit-constable be able to use his or her firearm or rifle accurately without errors, any man who is unable to shoot accurately without missing the target is completely useless to NPF.

By 1950, the number of aliens or foreigners in the police began to reduce particularly among the Hausa, while that of the Igbos witnessed a remarkable increase (NAK 1944-47). The benefits of having Indigenous persons serve as policemen in a community eluded colonial police until 1950s. This did not help police-public relations as the estranged officers were hated by the communities they served. In fact, S.Oyiboka (Interview cited) says police attitude of free use of firearms and careless shooting of unarmed civilians is a colonial mentality.

### **The Nature of Police-Public Relations during Transition to Independence in Nigeria.**

In the period of transition to independence, three innovative characteristics should be noted. First, the police were placed under the executive arm of government; second, police became easily accessible and recognised as they were given uniforms; and lastly, a proactive method was adopted to enhance their visibility. With this method, visibility patrols could help gain public confidence and cooperation with police. The government and the public whipping horse now is the police when insecurity thrives in the country. Police have the potential for limited violence and the legal right to use coercive means at their disposal to establish social control in the society in line with the social contract theory. Police must control, combat and prevent criminality nationwide, maintain public order and ensure peaceful co-existence of people and peace; and render social service or assistance to the public on request of same. Regular and timely disbursement of salary to police personnel is important more than an increase in salary.

The politicisation of the police was a major factor that strained her relations with the public especially before 1970. To Okelek and Mordi (2024, pp. 39-40), one major challenge facing local policing is the issue of political interference – policing in Nigeria during the first republic witnessed politicians interfering with the structure and operations of the force thus making the force a personal property of power accumulation directly or indirectly.

In line with the forgoing for instance, U. Umeh (interview June 18, 2024) says “in the 1970s there were allegations of snatching of ballot boxes and this was done by thugs on local police uniforms”.

The giving of awards to satisfactory performance and exceptional service delivery to police and the public should be encouraged. Powers are delegated –under section 8 of the Police Ordinance No. 2 of 1930 “to grant awards from the police reward fund not exceeding 2 pounds under section 31 of Police Ordinance”. The strategy will earn the police, public cooperation and partnership.

Police-public relations could be enhanced by: setting police institutions free from external control; enhancement police statutory allocation; support from government agencies to enhance professionalism; standard recruitment criteria for eligible persons into the police force; review of remuneration, promotion and condition of service to meet the risk in the job; human capacity development through in-service training program.

### **Challenges of Police public relations during the civil war in Nigeria.**

According to Okpevra (2024, p.19), ‘The Nigerian civil was a bloody conflict fought to maintain the unity of Nigeria nation. Nigeria and Biafrans (a group of secessionists) fought the war’. The co-relation of manpower and political interferences to police-public relations cannot be overemphasised in this study. However, among the challenges was an issue of limited resources. This means inadequate funding, equipment and personnel. The second challenge was institutional corruption. Corruption was

entrenched in the policing system and lacked accountability. Third challenge was citizens' wrong perception of the meaning of discretionary power as applied by police. Imperial police force made use of discretionary powers while on duty especially while carrying firearms even though Europeans also supervised them (Okeleke and Mordi 2024, p.40).

Fourth is the issue of security threats- the civil war posed a serious security threat. Fifthly, public perception of our Nigeria's policing model and effort did not help matters. Historical mistrust of police and negative media publications on police activities posed serious challenges to police-public relations in Nigeria. Finally, political interference- police appointments and operations became politicised. Godfatherism crept in, police participation in political party activities created suspicion of the police by the citizenry.

NPF was bedevilled by various challenges which affected her relations with the public they serve, such as a lack of operational patrol vehicles. Transport wing of the Nigeria police was established in 1950. Complainants sometimes had to bear the cost of fueling/servicing the vehicle. Opone (2010, p.125) summed it up that internally, group relations were based mostly on mutual suspicion, a carry-over from the colonial state. The police who are ineffective, illegitimate or unfair in protecting members of the public against "criminogenic behaviours" and elements will lose the public's confidence (interview, J. Aghanti, May 12, 2024). From there, corruption crept into the force. It has been said that "A public which tolerates corruption in its public life can hardly feel resentful if its government officials are corrupt" (Ajomale 1957, p.3).

Challenges to police image building include political interference, public expectations that were not met, technological advancement, social unrest and disturbances, budget constraints or poor budgetary allocation going to police, negative media publications on police activities and programs, historical injustices and mistrusts, limited resources available to the police force contingents stationed in various places, police misconduct and diversity/cultural issues.

### **The Nature of Police-Civilian Relations in Nigeria up to 1970.**

The Public Relations Department of NPF adopted various strategies to achieve her goal. One of the strategies is the community policing approach. The theory of police-public relations in postcolonial Nigeria emphasises building trust, cooperation and mutual understanding between policing agencies and the communities they serve. Here are key aspects: community policing which focuses on collaborative problem-solving and partnership building; social contract theory- which states that police services are provided in exchange for trust and cooperation; and legitimacy theory which states that police effectiveness relies on public perception of legitimacy.

Youth-wing of every community, chiefs, anti-cult volunteers, vigilante groups, elders in council and others were recruited into community policing to assist the police and to foster police-civilian cooperation. According to the Nigeria Police Force

Community Policing Handbook (2020, p.7), it is a community-based policing model that is adapted to suit the values, culture and ways of life that are peculiar to each community.

### **The Effects of Police-Civilian Faceoff on Internal Security of Nigeria**

Firstly, Police-civilian faceoff in Nigeria led to the erosion of trust as repeated confrontations undermined public confidence in policing agents in Nigeria.

Secondly, faceoff escalates tension leading to violence, disorderliness and instability.

Thirdly, police civilian clashes sparked wider social unrest and protests leading to a balloon of conflicts in the country.

Fourthly, it led to increase of crime because weakened policing capabilities embolden criminals.

Again, protests and clashes results in property/infrastructural damages and destructions nationwide. This in-turn, has economic implication and impacts as unrest affects local/foreign businesses, foreign direct /local investments and growth of the country's economy.

Finally, it led to decreased cooperation as the public became unwilling to cooperate with policing agents in the country. This made efforts at crime prevention and mitigation unproductive in Nigeria during the period under review.

### **Conclusion**

The paper highlighted various causes of police-civilian faceoff in Nigeria that includes police brutality and corruption, human rights violations/ abuses, poverty and economic inequality, lack of transparency and accountability, inadequate training and resources for police operations, political instability, politicization of police.

The paper recommends the removal of the vestiges of colonial legacy from the police; strengthening of institutional frameworks by establishing independent complaint mechanisms and accountability structures within the system; and revision of police pay-scale to meet the cost of living index as a first step towards instilling discipline in the force. Effective supervision of the rank-and-file is necessary to tackle a crisis of legitimacy and foster good relations with the public.

The paper also mentioned the stakeholders of police-civilian faceoff to include the Nigeria Police Force (NPF); federal, state and local governments; civil/ public society organisations; youth executives or community leaders; international partners; and media (print and electronic media especially the traditional media). The study recommends creation of an environment that foster police-community partnership, public cooperation and confidence in the police by the stakeholders of police-civilian faceoff.

Historians, political scientists, sociologists, other scholars and analysts have indeed discussed police-public relations. However, none of them traced it to colonialism. The historical perspective to the study of the origin, manifestations, and effect on the internal security of Nigeria, home-made adaptive strategies or solutions was carefully analysed in this study.

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