



## Social Inequalities and Conflicts among Security Operatives in Nigeria

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### Background to the Study

One of the greatest social challenges facing Nigeria, a nation popularly considered as the most populous nation of the continent of Africa is widespread violent conflicts and aggression. Violent conflict has not only become endemic in Nigeria, but has in recent times become the major defining characteristic of the giant of Africa. Virtually all the regions or geo-political zones of Nigeria have at various times suffered losses of human and material resources arising from violent group conflicts in recent times. (Albert, 2012). The spate of group violence in Nigeria has also negatively affected the development and growth of the nation, as both domestic and foreign investors are scared to invest in the ever promising economy. Cases of violence in Nigeria have become more worrisome as security agencies whose constitutional duty are to maintain law and order and secure the nation, are themselves caught in the web of violent conflicts. For instance, between the year 2000 and 2013, about ten officially reported cases of violent clashes involving security operatives occurred in various parts of the country. The clashes were mostly between the junior echelon of the two dominant security forces - the Nigerian Army and Nigeria Police, with most of the clashes occurring in urban centers. The clashes have culminated in the death of personnel of the forces and civilians who were caught in the cross-fire, destruction of unquantifiable private and public properties, caused confusion among civil populace, and disruption of commercial activities in the affected parts of the country (Odoma, 2011). Furthermore, the civil populace was in the wake of this unfortunate development are exposed to high rate of insecurity, as none of the forces were bold to appear on duty for fear of reprisal attacks. For an enduring state security, Adebayo (2004) and Arabamen (2004) have stressed the need for inter forces co-operation, since the public security forces are all the creation of the state.

However, the experience of the past three decades in some parts of Nigeria have shown that, rather than the expected mutual co-operation and respect, the state security forces have been in constant violent conflicts, culminating in the loss of lives and property and has thus exposed our nascent democracy to danger. After the initial and official *Daily Star* report of army/police clash in November, 1977 at the Port-Harcourt International Airport, inter forces conflict has become a recurrent cankerworm plaguing the internal security of Nigeria as witnessed on 6 July, 2004 and 4 October, 2005 army/police conflicts in Lagos, resulting in the loss of lives and property (Adetayo and Obasola, 2005; Thomas, 2005). The intensity of the destruction arising from the clash, led to a nationwide condemnation and the subsequent constitution of a Board of Inquiry (BOI) by the Federal Government of Nigeria to unfold the causes of this nagging social problem. As the report of the board was being awaited, several remedial measures were equally put in place to ensure harmonious co-existence of the public security agencies. The measures included the organization of the Army, Police and Para-military Games (security games) in Owerri in November 2005 and a week-long Presidential Retreat for the Armed Forces, Police and other security agencies between 30 January and 3 February 2006 both at the instance of the Federal government with the aim of developing harmonious co-existence of these forces in Nigeria (New SOJA, 2006). Yet army/police clashes have not abated as shown in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Army/Police Clashes in Nigeria and the Extent of Destruction

Serial	Date	Location	No: of Death	No: of Wounded	Extent of Destruction
1.	09/11/77	Port Harcourt	Several Policemen were killed	Several others were wounded	Civilians deserted their homes, tensions, threat to security and withdrawal of police from duty posts.
2.	06/09/92	Yaba	1 Army Colonel	Nil	Tension, threat to security, withdrawal of police from checkpoints, lawlessness among security agencies and miscreants.
3	06/07/04	Ikeja	1 Soldier	25 Policemen	Traffic flow hindered and economic and commercial activities disturbed.
4.	04/10/05	Ojuelegba	2 Policemen & 3 Civilians	6 Soldiers, 2 Policemen and several Civilians	Area 'C' Police station, Police Barracks and vehicles burnt, 40 detainees unlawfully released while traffic flow was hindered.
5.	16/01/06	Bauchi	Nil	2 Policemen	Bayan-Gari Police Officer's Mess burnt and several days of tension and uncertainty.
6.	24/09/06	FESTAC Town	Nil	3 Soldiers and 1 Policeman	Satellite Police station destroyed and confusion among civil populace
7.	30/03/07	Benin	Nil	10 Policemen	Ring-Road Police station destroyed.
8.	29/05/09	Orile	1 Soldier	Several Police men	Confusion, fear and panic among civilian population.
9.	11/02/10	Benin	2 Soldiers & 3 Mobile Policemen	10 persons wounded	Tension, serious threat to security and fear among civilians
10	11/04/13	Ibadan	Nil	Several Soldiers and Policemen injured	Confusion and apprehension among civilian, disruption of commercial activities.

Source: *Daily Star* 09/11/77; *Newswatch*, 21/09/92; *The Punch*, 5/10/05; *Guardian*, 5/10/05; *The Sun*, 16/01/06, 25/09/06; *Daily Independent*, 30/03/07 & *The Nation*, 12/02/10; *The Punch*, 12/04/13.

The recurrent nature of the clashes and the attendant colossal loss of lives and materials have given the nation and the leadership of the army and the police forces a lot of concern in recent times (Ejiabor, 2006). The problem is further complicated by the state of confusion and panic among the civil population each time the clashes occurs. The enormity of the destruction to lives and property arising from the violent clashes between the army and the police forces and the public outcry inspired the government's desire to investigate the problem. The investigation of this security-threatening social problem has always been limited to the constitution of Boards of Inquiry (BOI) each time the clashes occurred.

## The Objectives

The general objective of the study is to investigate the frequent army/police clashes in Nigeria. To achieve this objective, the study attempts to:

1. Investigate the remote and immediate causes of army/police clashes in Nigeria.
2. Ascertain how the forces perceive one another in the performance of their duties.
3. Discover possible implication of the clashes on the provision of security to the nation.

## Literature Review

### Causes of Army/Police Clash

It is true the world over that a tranquil and peaceful atmosphere is sacrosanct to economic growth and development of the state. However, no matter the level of commitment of a people to peaceful co-existence, conflict is bound to occur in social relations, as conflict is part and parcel of social dynamics (Vold, 1996; Coser, 1998; Okunola, 2002). Conflict between individuals or groups occurs as a result of divergent views and interests over incompatible rewards or resources (Irwin and Kenneth, 1995; Otite, 2001; Okunola, 2002; Nwolise, 2005). The rewards/resources could be in political, cultural, beliefs and economic spheres. However, conflict between and within groups is not completely evil, as it at times breeds positive social changes (Kukah, 1994; Ritzer, 1996; Vold, 1996; Coser, 1998; Nwolise, 2005).

The foundation of army/police clashes was laid as far back as the mid 1970s. Prior to this period as remarked by Adekanye (1993), the Nigeria Police which was the nearest occupational group to the army in terms of origin, status, pay and conditions of service, enjoyed comparatively better status and pay. But after the 1966 coup and the corresponding civil war between 1967 and 1970 within which time the military assumed the leadership position of the nation, the army had through their privileged vantage position conferred by their occupation effected a 'status coup', which marked the reverse of the pre-1966 state of affairs in police-army status comparison. The salary differentials between the military and the police force became widened in favour of the military in 1981 and definitely still more under the Babangida military presidency of 1985 to 1993. These public security forces were in the cause of this development dragged into a form of 'cold war' as the sudden status twist did not go down well with other occupational groups in the country. Adekanye (1993:13) further asserts that:

Thus it was that the Nigerian Soldiers were able to elevate themselves above not just their peers in Nigeria Police but other groups hitherto at the apex of the occupational prestige hierarchy.

The above, no doubt have inspired series of social unrests and agitations among other occupational groups in the country that characterized the entire period of military rule and specifically, the reign of Ibrahim Babangida (Onyeonoru, 1996).

Puritt and Carnevale (1982) quoted in Irwin and Kenneth (1995) argues that conflicts between groups, nations and individuals occur when the aspirations and goals of the parties are incompatible or where the parties have divergent interests regarding a particular issue. Due to the diametrically opposing interests of the groups, a resolution to conflict is always problematic because, the resolution that satisfies one party to the conflict may not necessarily satisfy the other.

Coser (1998) maintains that conflict between groups or individuals stem from the withdrawal of legitimacy. People are sufficiently aroused for conflict when channels for expressing grievances do not exist and when their desire for membership into higher ranks are thwarted, at this point, withdrawal of legitimacy occurs. With the withdrawal of legitimacy, conflict becomes the ultimate end product.

To understand the nuances of intergroup conflict, social parameters alone do not provide complete explanation. The interplay of the social forces such as competition among groups for resources, religious beliefs etc. and the cognitive or perceptual factors such as stereotyping groups, misperception of out-groups etc. will no doubt provide better understanding, because the way a group of people think about the social world (specifically about an opposing group) profoundly affects how they feel and behave in response to the other group (Irwin and Kenneth, 1995).

Taking a historical look at conflict on the continent of Africa, Olutayo (1997) remarks that long before the experimentation of military rule on the continent of Africa, the seed of military dictatorship had been planted by the French and British colonizers whose use of force left the post colonial African nations on the pedestal of force and discord. Colonial collaborators and imperialists who at the background provided support for military adventurers often exacerbated post-colonial conflict in many African countries. The erstwhile colonial masters cannot delink military regimes in Africa with the socialization they bequeathed their former colonies.

Metcalfe and Metcalfe (1993) further argue that individuals and groups are likely to work for peace only when the interest at stake is mutually advantageous or beneficial, but when their interests are diametrically opposed and incompatible, they are likely to be involved in destructive conflict not mindful of their past cordial relationship.

Systemic failure is considered as one of the potent causes of conflict especially within and between the army and the police forces in Nigeria. Sankara (2005:4) submits thus:

Men and women of the Nigeria Police, many of whom have to pay their way to join the Police, train under one of the most inhuman conditions imaginable, as attested to by the state of the Police colleges and after training, buy their own uniform, boots, writing materials, torchlight and all other working tools. Beside these, they have to go on for upward

of four or six months before they can earn first monthly salary, which amount to nothing at the end of the day.

Corroborating the views of Sankara is Bashir (1993) who remarked that the welfare of the forces especially members of the Nigeria Police force were neglected for a very long time. The neglect by their leaders and governments created a sense of alienation among them. Bashir, (1993:584) succinctly argued that:

It is universally accepted that the strongest motivation in any place of work is proper care or the welfare of the workers. To fail to take good care of worker's well-being is to create a sense of alienation in them. This undoubtedly will have adverse effect on their performance. The Nigeria Police Force has until recently suffered from government and social neglect. This has drastically destroyed the morale of officers. Their personal emoluments until recently was one of the lowest in the country while their working environment was one of the most unkept, not to talk of their residences. Generally they were marginalized in the scheme of things.....

In the same vein, the personnel of the Nigerian Army had suffered for a long time from neglect especially by their leaders who at sundry times were accused of misappropriating funds that was meant for their troops. This has led to grumbles and unrests among the lower echelon of the army (Dongjur, 2002).

Furthermore, the nature of conflict between groups will to a great extent depend upon their past experiences. If the groups involved in conflict enjoyed cordial relationship in the past, they might likely tread the path of compromise and avoid the extreme. But if their past is bedeviled with animosity, suspicion and hatred, conflict between them is likely to be volatile and destructive (Irwin and Kenneth, 1995).

One factor that has aggravated the violent inter-service rivalry especially between the police and the army personnel in Nigeria is envy occasioned by the illegal opportunities available to the police to extort money and or receive bribe from the citizenry in the course of their duties. The army (especially the lower echelon), who are poorly paid do not enjoy such opportunities. This experience breeds envy as the army sees this as an opportunity for the police to overcome poverty and neglect which they equally suffer. Due to this reason, any slight provocation or error from the police sparks destructive conflict between the forces. The matter is heightened with the enthronement of democracy which empowers the police as the only domestic security operative to handle and prosecute civil offences even if soldiers and senior army officers are involved. According to Omoigui (2006:15), "this has gone hand in hand with the perception of soldiers that the police no longer know its place and that the police which they used to deride, now feel superior". This has no doubt deepened inter-service animosity in the Nigerian security sector.

A forum of the Military, Police and Paramilitary Public Relations [MILPOPPROF] submits that, the incessant violent clashes between the various security agencies and army /police in particular in the Lagos metropolis are largely due to the dearth in information available to the personnel of these forces about their sister forces. This has led to widespread ignorance especially among the junior officers in such matters as the complementary roles of other forces to the actualization of own roles, areas of mutual co-operation and exclusivity as well as their perception of the ranks and organizational structure of other forces. This condition has more often than not, led to many unnecessary and avoidable violent clashes in recent times in Lagos (MILPOPPROF, 2007). The ignorance about other forces is however attributed to the lack of professional forum for regular interaction especially among the lower echelon and more importantly, the low educational qualification required for entry into the lower cadre of the security forces.

Furthermore, Marizu (2007) identifies myriads of factors responsible for the fracas among the public security forces. Such reasons include among others, defending a regime's interest, economic poverty and ignorance among the lower ranking officers. In his words:

The skirmishes between the lower ranks especially among the Armed Forces and the Police are largely due to ignorance and perhaps a case of defending regime interest. Another factor could be economic poverty because the officers have maintained solid discipline ...It has been identified that indiscipline, ignorance and poor training among others are the bane of the clashes. (Marizu, 2007:2).

Similarly, it has also been stressed that, of all the causes of the army, police and paramilitary forces clash in Lagos, illegal business 'stand tall'. For instance, Taiwo (2007:4) suggests that:

The friction among members of these government agencies that necessitated the birth of this Association are mostly perpetrated by the lower ranks, especially among the Armed Forces and Police, or Customs and Police and sometimes between Customs and Soldiers who may want to engage themselves in a manner inimical to Customs' laws and regulations especially as it affects smuggling. I know that the engagement of these personnel in this act is largely due to ignorance and economic poverty. The junior officers who display acts of gross indiscipline require reorientation. They must eschew intolerance and always embrace our traditional esprit-de-corps and camaraderie in the discharge of their essential functions.

The forces have been accused of various degrees of excesses on their host communities. This has been the defining characteristics of the agencies since their colonial days and has therefore, not only been responsible for conflicts with other security agencies, but have equally alienated them from the people they are meant to protect (Alemika and Chukwuma, 1997; Olutayo, 1997).

Omoigui (2006) presents some reasons for the destructive rivalries between the army and the police in Nigeria. They include extortion, complex protections, the desire to avenge dishonor suffered at the hands of the police etc. Omoigui (2006:4) further stresses that:

The most common scenarios for these clashes include traffic police demanding vehicle particulars and driving licenses from military personnel or seeking to search their private vehicles; complex "protection" deals between servicemen in uniform who ride for free in public transport vehicles and then proceed to protect their hosts from bribe seeking policemen; or the desire of the military personnel to retrieve friends and colleagues who have been arrested by the

police for one reason or the other. Sometimes it is a desire to “avenge” perceived dishonour suffered at the hands of the police. Another potential for crisis is when the police engage in hot pursuit of suspects who for one reason or another then take refuge inside military barracks. One particular scenario that is not fully appreciated by the public revolve around the fact that in order to make ends meet many junior soldiers own and operate motorcycles (a.k.a “Okada”) with which they engage in the business of public transportation after normal working hours. This provides a lot of opportunities for conflict with traffic policemen.

Furthermore, the overlapping historical origin of the army and the police has been linked to their rivalries in recent times. This overlapping historical origin and the dramatic status transformation (especially) in favour of the army is argued to have engendered the struggle for seniority and superiority among the forces, which in essence has been the source of the “cold war” between the forces, from which destructive clashes result (Adekanye, 1993; Omoigui, 2006).

Lack of regular interaction between the forces especially among officers of the lower ranks is argued to be responsible for the clashes. Ekong (2007:10) submits that:

We are very happy to see the Forum making this move. Personally, I have participated in the Presidential Retreat; we called a spade a spade – no interaction. Hence we recommended that there should be regular interaction among members of the security operatives. It is very painful reading about needless clashes involving uniform personnel.

Furthermore, the early superior status enjoyed by the police, which they lost to the army through military rule may have been linked in part to their persistent clashes. From their origin, the police was not only senior to the army, but they also enjoyed superior status and remuneration until the first military incursion into civil politics (Adekanye, 1993) which saw them [police] losing their erstwhile superior status to the army. Adekanye (1993:7) argues further that:

Army member of the NCO grade received less pay than their counterparts in the Police... Thus it was that Nigerian soldiers were able to elevate themselves above not just their peers in the Nigeria Police but other groups hitherto at the apex of the occupational prestige hierarchy.

This occupational twist in favour of the army was underscored by the uniqueness of the military job coupled with its high risks, such as the risk of possible death (Adekanye, 1993; Olutayo, 1997). But the police did not only lose their status; they were also exposed to some forms of repressory measures by which the army targeted at weakening the police force. Such repressory measures included operational jealousy and suspicion, denial and hijacking of security equipment procured to enhance the performance of the police (Omoigui, 2006). This situation, which commenced from former President Shagari’s regime, lasted throughout the military era in Nigeria and has further fuelled a ‘cold war’ between the security agencies.

Group conflict often has their causes rooted in the perception of one group about the other. The cognitive orientation directs the definition a group gives to social life and it in fact, directs their action and interaction with such group. The cognitive culture manifests when a group stereotypes the other, that is, a false notion that a group develops about the out-group. The belief and stereotype that groups hold about each other play crucial role in intergroup conflict. Stereotype enhances misperception of the others, which is often at the heart of intergroup conflict. White (1968) quoted in Irwin and Kenneth (1995) identifies six categories of misperceptions that can contribute to the escalation of group conflict, namely:

1. *The diabolical enemy image*: Each side sees the other as having dubious character and being diabolical.
2. *The virile self-image*: Each side sees “backing down” as an affront to its own power and honor, so it must take a “firm stand” against the other side.
3. *The moral self-image*: Each side sees itself as morally upright, while the other side is evil. This is the converse of the diabolical enemy image. Often both sides believe that God is on their side.
4. *Selective inattention*: Each side in a conflict selectively ignores important aspects of the conflict, perhaps paying attention to a single potential outcome.
5. *Absence of empathy*: In the time of conflict, each side ignores the perspectives and needs of the other side. The parties to the conflict cannot see things from the other side’s point of view.
6. *Military overconfidence*: In the midst of conflict, the fear generated may give rise to overconfidence in one’s ability to “teach the other side a lesson”

Any assumption made based on this misperception may lead to excessive risk taking and the escalation of conflict among groups.

Army/police clashes are not limited to Nigeria alone. There are reported cases of the army/police clashes in some parts of the world. For instance, in Ouagadougou- Burkina Faso, there was a violent clash between the nation’s army and the police on the 26 day of December 2006. The clash led to the death of five security officers (3 soldiers and 2 policemen), while several others particularly civilians sustained various degrees of injury from stray bullets fired in the shoot-out. Additionally, about 600 inmates serving various jail terms in Ouagadougou prison escaped from detention during the unrest. The clash was sparked by a group of angry soldiers who were on a revenge mission for the death of their colleague the day before in a late night brawl.

In the same vein, the Pakistan Press International [PPI] reported an army/police clash in Lahore on 20th October, 2003. Matters relating to the use of tinted glass reportedly caused the clash. The clash generated unnecessary tension among the forces as well as the civil population. The organized civil society in Pakistan condemned the disgraceful act, which was interpreted to mean that, the security operatives have by their action leading to the clash shown that they were above the law. A probe panel was therefore demanded of the government that was accused of failure to maintain law and order.

On 1st October 2002, another army/police clash occurred in Jakarta- Indonesia. The clash that claimed at least lives of four police officers occurred among about 100 Indonesian soldiers and their police counterparts. The clash was reportedly caused by the arrest of a soldier by the local police for drug offence. As a result, a group of soldiers attacked a

police post with machetes, rifles and grenades, killing about four police officers. The Afghan experience presents the worse case of army/police clashes ever reported considering the number of death and destructions recorded in a single clash, the kinds of weapons used by the security officers and the number of days the clash lasted. The clash, which lasted for five consecutive days, was said to have started from a minor argument between personnel of the forces. The clash left in its trail, two military commanders, eight police officers and nine civilians dead, while unquantified amount of properties were destroyed with several civilians left with various degrees of injury. The level of destruction to lives and property could not have been less as the fighting forces used dangerous weapons such as rockets and heavy weapon not only on the location of their opponent, but also on residential districts.

The above literature provides two striking revelations. Firstly, the destructive army/police clashes occurred as a result of flimsy reasons such as minor quarrels, brawling at the pub, indiscipline and the involvement of the forces in drug related offences. Equally striking is the fact that, once checked for those misdemeanors, the security officers get offended and then embark on murder, assault and destruction. Secondly, none of the cases reported in the literature involves security forces of the developed nations of the world; rather they involve army and policemen from the developing or less-developed countries of Africa and Asia.

## Theoretical Framework

To provide a good theoretical foundation for the study, insights are drawn from the duo of Political Economy and Vold's Group Conflict theories.

### The Political Economy Theory

Adopting a causal perspective in explaining inter group clashes, the political economy posits that the larger political and economic system generate the problems associated with social relations (Adam Smith 1723-1790 quoted in Ritzer, 1996). In other words, there exist invisible hands that shape the market and goods. Even though, the roles of individuals who make-up the social structure are critical, greater emphasis is laid on the structure of the society. The socio-economic realities exist over and above individuals/groups and so exert enormous influence on social relations. The problem of poverty for instance, is a pointer to the feelings arising from the market system as well as the society. The concern of policy makers should rather than condemn social actors be to gather data on laws by which the market system operates.

Relating the political economy theory to the study, the persistent army-police clashes in Nigeria might be a symptom of some socio-political factors existing as 'invisible hands' over which the security agencies have little or no control, but to which they react.

### Group Conflict Theory

Taking a cue from the functionalist perspective, the group conflict theory presents human beings as fundamentally group-involved beings. Groups are formed in human communities based on shared interest. This shared interest can best be furthered through collective action (Vold, 1986). New groups are formed as new interests arise, while existing ones may get weakened and fizzle out if they no longer serve their usual purposes. Groups when formed become effective action unit through the direction and co-ordination of the activities of members by their leaders. Society to Vold (1986) is a network of groups driven by diverse interests. Group consciousness develops through experience gained from participating in regular group activities. Consequently, emotional attachments to group activities rather than rational thinking develop. However, inter group conflict begins when their interests and purposes tend to overlap and or encroach on one another, hence their relationship becomes competitive. This competitive conflict engenders members' emotional attachment and loyalty to their various groups. Like other conflict theorists, Vold posits that inter group conflict is not entirely destructive, because it is one of the principal and essential social processes in the functioning of the society as it ensures stability, cohesion and social order (Vold, 1986; Kukah, 1994; Ritzer, 1996; Coser, 1998; Okunola, 2002).

In relating the theory to this study, the conflict between these forces whose roles are fundamentally similar but operationally different might be informed by either overlapping of responsibilities or the encroachment of the roles of one of the forces upon the other, thereby generating a competitive stance among them. Furthermore, the similarities in their orientation and status-twist in favour of the army, as well as the repeated clashes in recent times may have equally encouraged emotional attachment to their various groups and group ideals. The three decades of military dictatorship under which the police arguably assumed a subservient status (Omoigui, 2006) may have according to Irwin and Kenneth (1995), further aggravated the conflict between the forces.

## Methodology

A total of 1,047 respondents were selected for the study using the qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. For the qualitative study, 47 respondents comprising 10 civilian eyewitnesses and 15 respondents each from the army and police personnel were selected for the in-depth interviews (IDI). While 2 respondents (1 each) from among the police and army retired commanders and 5 members of the Boards of Inquiry (BOI)/Military, Police and Paramilitary Public Relation Officer's Forum (MILPOPPROF) constituted the key informants for the study. For the selection of 47 respondents for the IDI and KII, the police and army formations close to the locations where the clashes occurred in the past were clustered (Oshodi, Orile, FESTAC Town and Ojuelegba), while civilian eyewitnesses in those locations (at least 2 each) were selected. In the selection of army and police respondents, 5 Commissioned Officers and 10 Non-commissioned Officers (NCOs) were sampled. Their selection was based on their population, deployment and roles played during the clashes. The conduct of the in-depth interviews and key informant interviews was by snowball. Furthermore, 1000 civilian respondents were targeted for the conduct of the qualitative study. For the selection of 1000 civilian respondents, the study area was clustered into four (Oshodi, Ojuelegba, Orile and FESTAC Town) where the clashes occurred in Lagos. From each of the clusters, (probabilistic method (simple random) was employed. Specifically, at Ojuelegba, Oshodi Orile and FESTAC Town clusters, 285,370, 320, and 350 families were respectively listed from which 250 respondents each (family heads) were sampled using the simple random method.

## Findings

Violent conflicts among security operatives particularly between the army and police personnel in Nigeria have become worrisome in the recent past. This is because of the frequency of occurrence, the insecurity it encourage, number of casualties (civilian and military) and the hopelessness that often accompany the clashes. Most of the violent clashes between the forces have been linked to their involvement illegal businesses/duties. The clashes often started with minor misunderstanding between two individual members of the forces, but quickly escalated thereafter through solidarity and sympathy for group members. The study also revealed a strong relationship between poverty and the involvement of the forces in illegal duties. The welfare of the forces has suffered a great deal of neglect by relevant agencies over the years. The cumulative effect of the neglect is poverty, which has often inspired the forces to abandon their constitutional responsibilities for illegal duties (Sankara, 2005). Such duties were not organized nor controlled since their leadership does not authorize them. Participant on such duties were driven by incompatible personal interests and not professional ethic.

Although gross indiscipline, encroachment on constitutional roles and organizational rivalry among these dominant security forces were discovered responsible for the clashes, it is further discovered that the clashes have consistently involved the lower echelon of the forces. There is virtually no official record of any of such clashes involving commissioned officers of the forces. This explains why casualties of this nagging problem have equally been restricted to non-commissioned officers and civilians among whom they work.

The study however reveals that the involvement of non-commission officers in the clashes is a direct effect of social inequalities artificially created by the leadership of the forces through the institutionalization of poverty. For instance, one of civilian respondents posits that:

The best way to stop the lingering army/police clashes is to revisit their welfare. The officers especially the other ranks have suffered too long from neglect. Their welfare has not been catered for. Their salaries and quarters need urgent improvement. It is their condition that encourage them into illegal duties, extortion and other vices that often bring them into contact and clashes (IDI/Oshodi/Civilian / 2009).

Another respondent also corroborated the above views thus:

There is no doubt, the lower ranking officers of the forces are not adequately cared for and so the right thing that the relevant agencies must do is to improve on their welfare. But, I am of the opinion that the problem of indiscipline and regards for other security forces must be promptly addressed by their various leadership (IDI/Apapa/Army/2009).

Furthermore, MILPOPPROF (an adhoc military and paramilitary body formed as a result of incessant inter agency clash) also asserts that:

Ignorance, lack of exposure and understanding of one's responsibilities are responsible for their involvement. You will find out that, the commissioned officers by virtue of their exposure and knowledge, interact with one another at various levels of training exercises and so know one another and are happy, but this is completely absent among the other ranks of the forces. (IDI/Apapa/Army Commander/2009).

Equally a police respondent speaking as an insider confirmed the impact of poverty thus:

Don't blame us, it is all the time struggles, if one did not struggle nobody care for you. It is poverty that brings about the life of struggles. At the point of struggling to achieve, if someone somewhere stop you, you will feel bad and can react anyhow (IDI/FESTAC/Police/2009).

The structural inequality in the Nigeria security system which has created socio-economic imbalance in favour of commissioned officers has encouraged wide spread ignorance, suspicion and hatred among the forces. This has often exacerbated inter and intra agency conflicts and grumblings. Apart from inter forces conflicts, there have also been intra-agency ranchor and grumbling in the recent past. For instance, the police being tired of repeated cheating and fraud orchestrated by their leadership and officer's Corps, for the first time went on strike in Nigeria on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2002 (BBC News, 2002).

In the same vein, The Nigerian Tribune of 14 April, 2014 reported that the junior officers of the Nigeria Police have again threatened to go on strike if their welfare was not improved for them to enjoy what the Commissioned Officers were enjoying. The police are not alone in the ill-treatment of junior security operatives in the hands of their superiors. In 2009, Nigerian Army dismissed but later commuted the dismissal of 27 Soldiers to retirement as a result of demonstration over their allowances that were usually diverted by the Commissioned Officers. Such age-long structural imbalances in favour of the high echelon of the army have generated professional grumbles among soldiers. For instance Dungjur (2002) noted that:

Without mincing words, we would like to bring to the notice of this same authority that, they have under-estimated the quality, personality and caliber of our modern soldiers. Like officers, if not better, the soldiers have been touched by the current wave of globalisation characterized by awareness. Gone are those days when officers believe that they are paid to think for us (soldiers). Soldiers can now think adequately for themselves. We thus say no to deceit, exploitation and corruption perpetuated under the guise of so-called military discipline. We intend to remain loyal to any authority only when we are not only seen as human beings, but treated as human beings and stakeholders in the struggle for the survival of our nascent democracy. To this end we urgently call the relevant arm of the government to address this issue to see that the army and indeed the country remain united.

Corroborating the above views of Dungjur is Odoma (2012) who presents the continuous exploitation and impoverishment of the junior cadre of the army thus:

One of the greatest problems military contingents face while on peacekeeping is financial misappropriation. This create further problem for the troops. Troop's allowances are deducted many times for several reasons, yet you cannot complain. Similarly, payment of our allowances can be delayed for several months. You are aware of the Akure Episode which presents an insight to what we face in the hands of our leaders on foreign mission, yet you cannot complain. Because of this, troops get involved in many unethical practices to survive, and this leads to national embarrassment most of the time.

It is thus instructive to reiterate that the problem of insecurity in Nigeria can hardly be handled perfectly when the kind of inequalities and grumbles presented above is allowed to continue. A respondent have argued that, inter agency clashes particularly among the junior ones is inevitable not only because of the roles they play, but because of their relevance. For instance, an informant stressed that:

The junior officers of the forces are the most visible cadre of the forces. They are the people that are tasked with the day to day execution of all organizational plans. This makes them more visible than the commissioned officer's cadre who mostly operates from the background. This explains why these categories of the forces should not be allowed to suffer neglect. (IDI/V/Island/Rtd Police officer/2009).

If this is how relevant the other ranks of the forces are in the execution of security plans, it then mean that it is in the interest of the nation that their welfare be taken seriously. It would not be wrong to suggest that, leakages of information and or connivance of security operatives as noted in the recent times (Adepegba, 2012) are linked to poverty occasioned by relegated welfare and status. If poverty can lead them to illegal business, it can equally encourage leakage of information, especially when enticed with what they cannot get from performing their constitutional roles.

## Recommendations

No doubt, violent conflicts are endemic in Nigeria. The involvement of security operatives in violent conflicts has aggravated the case of violence in Nigeria. Considering the grievous social and economic implications, it is in the interest of security operatives and the nation in particular to quickly check the menace.

Poverty and social inequalities have been held responsible for the involvement of the junior personnel of the forces in illegal businesses that enhance the frictions. Therefore addressing the problem of poverty means addressing many of Nigeria social problems including security threats. It has been argued that the current wave of restiveness and violent crimes in several parts of Nigeria today are enhanced by poverty. Hence, once poverty problem is sincerely addressed, solutions to other social challenges will begin to naturally unfold.

The continuous recruitment of poorly educated or semi-illiterates into the junior cadre of the forces is a ploy to perpetually put the cadre in ignorance so that they can easily be exploited. In this globalized world, security requires knowledge, training and skills. It is therefore absurd to maintain troops that are largely illiterate and expect to be secured by them. Therefore from their recruitment, attention should be given to education, skills, training and re-training of security personnel.

The extension of infrastructures and welfare to the junior personnel of the forces will reduce the grumbles and social isolation that have created opportunities for security operatives to be easily enticed by criminally minded citizens. So far, the confidence of average Nigerian in the public security to provide security has dwindled because of the incessant conflicts among security operatives. This explains why civilian synergy with security operative is weak in Nigerian.

Nigerian security operatives need to quickly embark on confidence building so that they can win the support of the civil populace. This can hardly be achieved if the present level of animosity among the forces is allowed to continue through social inequality.

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