

## **Power Consciousness of Security Operatives: The Bane of Inter-Agency Feud in Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

One of the greatest security challenges Nigeria has to contend with in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the repeated cases of violent inter forces clashes in some cities. Most of these clashes involved the personnel of the Nigerian Army and Nigeria Police. The problem made crime control extremely difficult due to lack of synergy between the security operatives. Consequently, the security situation has become porous in recent times, while the nation has been tagged one of the insecure nation of the world and thus tends to scare investors. Adopting the Group Conflict and Culture and Agency theories as background, the study which utilized the qualitative and quantitative methods of data gathering was conducted in four locations (clusters) in Lagos where the clashes have frequently occurred in the recent past. Although, factors such as economic poverty, neglect, gross indiscipline, ignorance etc featured prominently as causes, the study further discovered that the consciousness among officers that enormous power and or authority is conferred on them without any institution charged with oversight functions made the aforementioned factors to manifest. It is therefore recommended that civilian oversight on the police and all policing agencies be intensified if security of lives and property of Nigerians must be achieved.

### **Introduction**

Violent conflicts between security operatives have over the years become a recurrent decimal in inter forces relations in Nigeria. For over three decades, hardly did we end a year without recording violent clashes between security operatives, particularly between personnel of the Nigerian Army and the Nigeria Police Force (Odoma, 2011). Other security operatives and Para-military organizations in Nigeria have also been caught in the web of violent clashes over the years (MILPPOPROF, 2007; Oluwole, 2012). Although, clashes involving the police and paramilitary agencies are not as endemic as the type between army and police personnel, there is no doubt that there has been a cold war existing among them over the years (Adekanye, 1993; Omoigui, 2006). This problem which has since assumed a dangerous dimension in the recent past has become a source of reproach to the various security operatives as they have began to lose relevance in the mind of average Nigerians. The nation has not fared well in the recent past as Nigeria has since started to drift toward anomic state. Although Nigeria is generally tagged the most populous nation of African continent, due to frequent clashes between security operatives she is described by the Human Rights Watch (2005; Akosile, 2008) as one of the most violent prone and unsecured nation of the world. This perception is hinged on the frequency of unrest and heinous crimes such as armed robbery, Kidnapping, assassination, hostage taking, terrorism etc and the fact that, none of the geopolitical zones of

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the country is insulated from violence of one form or the other (Albert, 2012). Yet, security operatives were always caught napping without any possible remedy to the onslaught of criminals (Ajayi and Aderinto, 2008). Furthermore, it has been argued that the failure of the security operatives to address some of the daunting security challenges of Nigerian state is linked to lack of synergy between these security agencies. More so, at the peak of their crises, security provision to the citizenry suffered a great setback as none of the security agencies had the courage of performing their constitutional roles openly due to the fear of reprisal attacks (Odoma, 2011). This has given criminals ‘free days’ to unleash threat and terror on defenseless Nigerians whose properties were looted in broad daylight with impunity.

Although, factors such as poverty, neglect, corruption and lawlessness among the forces have been held responsible for inter forces clashes, the consciousness among the personnel of these forces occasioned by the power and or authority that their jobs confer on them have of late been considered the chief of all the factors responsible for the consistent inter forces wrangling in Nigeria. This work which utilizes the group conflict theory and the culture and agency theory presents the chronicles of Army-Police clashes, causes of inter force feud, the relevance of power consciousness/the desire to wield such power with impunity and proffering recommendations that would forestall future occurrence of the problem.

### The Problem

From 1977 when the first clash was reported till date, rapid occurrence of the army/police clashes has been witnessed in Nigeria as indicated in the table 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 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.	24/5/2011	Badagry	A Soldier & 5 Policemen	Several persons sustained degrees of injury	Confusion, reprisal apprehension and lack of security to the citizen

**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, 25/05/11.

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 force 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 occurred. The enormity of the destruction arising from the violent clashes between the army and the police force 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. Consequently, solutions and remedial measures of the government are often based on the reports of these boards of inquiry, yet the problem has not abated. The weakness of the measures to adequately address the problem is indicative of the fact that lacunae exist that must be filled.

The army and police force are formal social control agencies created by the state to ensure that her internal and external security is guaranteed (Nigerian Army, 2006; Nigeria Police, 2006). To realize this noble objective, these forces are expected to work in collaboration with each other (Omoigui, 2006). Although, the forces exist to provide security to the nation, their responsibilities are well entrenched in the constitution. For instance, the police are tasked with the provision and maintenance of internal/domestic security, while the army shoulders the responsibility of safeguarding the territorial borders against any form of external aggression (Asemota, 1993; Oditia, 1993). With these unambiguous roles of the forces, the justification for their violent clashes over the years remains unknown. Therefore, there is the need for empirical investigation of the problem to unravel the cause of the clashes, examine the public perception of the forces arising from their frequent clashes and ascertain how the forces perceive one another in the performance of their duties.

### **Objectives**

The general objective of the study was to investigate the frequent army/police clashes in Lagos- Nigeria. To achieve this objective, the study attempted to:

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

### **Literature Review**

#### *The Cause of Conflict*

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 occur 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, 1993; Ritzer, 1996; Vold, 1996; Coser, 1998; Nwolise, 2005).

The foundation of army/police clashes in Nigeria 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 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 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) This condition 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).

Systemic failure is considered 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 (Bashir1993). 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; Odoma, 2012).

One factor that has aggravated the violent inter-service rivalry especially between the police and 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 were poorly paid did not enjoy such opportunities. This experience breed 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 that 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).

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)

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 dishonour 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.

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 the former President Shagari’s regime, lasted throughout the military era in Nigeria and has further fuelled the ‘cold war’ between the security agencies.

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 to nurse 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 Margaret Archer's Culture and Agency theory and Vold's Group Conflict theory.

### *Culture and Agency Theory*

The Culture and Agency theory is woven around the concept of morphogenesis. Morphogenesis is concerned with the study over time of the structural changes vis-a-vis actions and interactions that emerge from the social environment and the subsequent socio-cultural elaboration that occurs. It implies the dual influences of structure (culture) on agency (social actors) and their actions/interactions and the aftermath of these actions (elaboration) on the culture that *abi-nitio* generated them. The understanding of this chain of development is crucial to analyzing or understanding the social world (Ritzer, 1996). Time is accorded a central place as it provides a 'socio-cultural theatre' for this interactive relationship to thrive. Cultural conditioning refers to the parts or components of the cultural system. Socio-cultural interaction deals with the interrelationships between cultural agents. Therefore, the relationship between cultural conditioning and cultural interaction is the variant of the culture – agency issue (Ritzer, 1996). The socio-cultural system is appreciated to logically predate any socio-cultural action and interaction and so does affect and is affected by such actions of agents. Cultural elaboration is the end product of socio-cultural actions and interactions and changes that is induced in them by alterations in the socio-cultural system.

However, Archer (1988) quoted in Ritzer (1996) posits that the socio-cultural system could be exposed to the vicissitudes of conflict and order as the various parts of the cultural system may either contradict or complement the cultural conditioning. This action will determine whether cultural relationships are stable or changing. The stability or otherwise of the socio-cultural system will to a great extent depend on agents who have the innate ability to either reinforce or resist the influence of the cultural system. Archer's Culture and Agency theory is premised on four propositions namely: that cultural system is made up of components that are logically related to one another; that the cultural system has causal impact on the socio-cultural system; that there is causal relationship among individuals and groups (agencies) that exists at the socio-cultural level; and that changes at the socio-cultural level lead to elaboration of the cultural system.

The Culture and Agency theory provides insight into the social relation between the two dominant public security forces whose interaction is occasioned by securing the Nigerian social system. As social actors (agency), both possess the ability to respond to the provision of security to the nation in different ways, the action which according to Ritzer (1996), leads either to contradiction or reinforcement of cultural conditioning. Conflict between the forces could be the manifestation of a latent socio-cultural elaboration which is the end product of cultural conditioning (the need to provide security), depicting a causal relationship of culture and agency as well as locating their conflict within the social system that *abi-nitio* created them. However, Culture and Agency theory alone may not provide complete elucidation on inter forces conflict in Nigeria, hence the integration of the group conflict theory to complement the explanation with social factors.

### *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).

### **Sampling Technique**

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 Relations 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 quantitative 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.

### **Summary of the Findings**

Inter forces rivalries, especially between the personnel of the army and the police have become prevalent in many urban centers in Nigeria and particularly in Lagos in the past decades. Death of citizens (army and police personnel inclusive), destruction of properties and disruption of commercial/economic activities were often the aftermaths of these violent clashes. Most of the violent clashes between the forces from the year 2000 to 2010 in Lagos have been linked to their involvement in illegal duties/businesses. 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. Participants on such duties were directed by personal interests (in monetary terms) they wish to achieve which in most cases are incompatible, thereby necessitating violent conflict between the forces (Metcalf and Metcalf, 1993; Ritzer, 1996; Vold, 1996).

Gross indiscipline was found to be one of the major causes of the clash. The repeated nature of the problem is coming at the heel of the transition from the prolonged period of military rule to a government of elected democrats in Nigeria. The military dispensation was marked by widespread indiscipline, impunity and corruption in public places (Adekanye, 1993; Onyeonoru, 1996; Ayoade, 1997; Onyeonoru, 2002). The study discovered that the forces have internalized and carried over the military socialization of flagrant disrespect for other agencies into the democratic dispensation. They often take laws into their hands when relating with other forces; the resistance to such culture has generated violent clashes among the forces in the decade of the second democratic experiment in Nigeria.

Encroachment on the constitutional roles of one of the forces by the other was another reason for the clashes. The study showed that army personnel sometimes tampered with the roles of the police. At other times, soldiers showing that they can perform the roles of the police attempted to correct the police while they were performing their constitutional duties. Resistance to this has at times resulted in violent clashes among the security operatives in Lagos. The widespread culture of corruption in Nigeria was discovered to have also been responsible for the frequent violent inter forces clashes. The abuse of the professional working environment of the Nigeria Police force that often manifests in the extortion of money from civilians and motorists has sparked jealousy among some soldiers. These soldiers see the police as making brisk and lucrative businesses out of such extortions. This has inspired some soldiers to contest the traditional roles of the police, so that they can also enjoy the gains of corrupt and unprofessional opportunities available to the police force.

The inter forces clashes especially between the junior officers of the army and police force have been further compounded by the lack of forum for interaction among the forces. It was discovered that majority of the officers were ignorant of the rank and organizational structures of the other force. This made them offend one another very easily on interaction. It was however noticed that, status/superiority



struggles existed among the forces particularly during joint endeavours. The study discovered that the personnel of the police force did not mind if an officer of similar rank in the army commanded them. On the other hand, the military personnel were not in support of such arrangement. This goes to indicate that the military personnel have a greater desire to occupy superior status among security operatives than the police.

The findings of the study reinforce the two theories that were used to provide theoretical base for the study: Culture and Agency theory and Group Conflict theory. The clashes between the police and the army personnel in Nigeria are not at individual levels. Although, the clashes always started at the level of individuals, professional sympathy and recourse to the organizational or professional solidarity usually overshadowed the personal interests. Since the main cause of their clashes was poverty generated by either the government or the leadership of the forces, it would not be wrong to state that the system that produced them also caused the conflict (Ritzr, 1996). The study also showed that the clashes were always related to involvement in illegal businesses by the security personnel. These personal interests, which were incompatible with their professional roles and interests of others beclouded any prior relationship, which further exposed the forces to violent clashes (Vold, 1986) as have been noticed in Nigeria between 2000 and 2010.

### **The Abuse of Power and Authority**

Power as defined by Max Weber is the ability of an individual or group to command the compliance of others even in the face of stiff resistance (Haralambos and Holborn, 2004; Giddens, 2009). To sociologists, power can clearly be distinguished into two forms-coercion and authority. A coercive power exist where others are made to comply through the naked used of force. Here threat and force are the basis for compliance, with military might being a good example of coercive power. Power is considered an authority when compliance of others is based on legitimacy. In other words, those who wield power and those who comply do so on the common perception that the exercise of such power is right, just and necessary. However, both power and authority require a measure of force in ensuring the compliance of others. It is instructive to note that when an individual is conferred with authority that is not checkmated, the consciousness of such authority incubate abuse and corruption.

The security agencies in Nigeria were recruited, trained and kitted with the tax payer's money and were thus empowered to ensure the security of the state. The state confers on them the authority to protect the citizenry even if it requires force, search, restriction of rights, arrest and detention where necessary. It is discovered in the conduct of this study that the long period of neglect suffered by the personnel of these forces (particularly the lower echelon) and the attendant economic poverty encouraged the abuse of the authority conferred on these forces that used such opportunity to enrich themselves as a way of coping with poverty. For instance, a respondent who was equally a security operative argued that

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 consciousness of the power to carry weapon and the type of weapon needed for the performance their duties was another factor responsible for the clashes between the forces. The superiority of weapons was seen to mean superiority of status/service to the nation by the personnel of the forces. A respondent posit that

Even the police know that army is the No: 1 security force in Nigeria. It is not possible that while on domestic security operation he is made to command me. I don't think I will accept such arrangement because it will cause trouble. (IDI/Ikeja/Army/2009).

The above responses indicate the kind of relationship that exist between these dominant security forces whose roles are supposed to be the basis for sustainable peace and development of the nation. The consciousness of the superiority or otherwise of the weapons used in the performance of their constitutional roles beclouded the relevance of other agencies to the nation. And due to lack of adequate checks by relevant authorities on such behaviour, the opportunity of access to superior weapons was often abused. Any resistance to such abuses by other agencies performing their legitimate duties led to intense conflicts as experienced in Lagos-Nigeria in the past decades.

Illegal business was discovered by this study to be the theatre of the clashes between personnel of the forces. It should be noted that, the same power consciousness equally encouraged the involvement of the forces in illegal businesses. They believed no one can check them since they are the executor of governmental security policies. A civilian respondent argued that

I will link the remote cause with poverty and gross indiscipline. It is gross indiscipline that will make security operatives like the police and army to be involved in illegal business. The theatre of the clashes has always been on illegal duties. The immediate cause is excesses. The forces indulge in illegal businesses in uniform, the idea is that, while in uniform they can do anything and get away with it after all, they are the people who decide who is a criminal. In their excesses and desperation, they hardly respect other persons and authority. Every one of them claims they cannot be checked. It is at this point of two captains in a ship that they clash. (KII/Board of Inquiry/2009)

### **Recommendations**

The findings of this study present both policy and academic implications for the provision of security which is believed to be the primary ingredient for sustainable development of any nation. The study revealed the causes of the persistent clashes between the public security agencies as well as its influences on the provision of security, the image as well as the economy of the nation. The appreciation of these findings is important for designing an enduring road map for the national security. It is therefore, recommended that:

- The government and the leadership of the forces must endeavour to improve the lots of their personnel. This work discovered that nearly all the causes of their clashes were in one way or the other linked to poverty. Frustration and anger brought about by poverty inspired the security personnel's desire to fend for themselves; this often led to unprofessional friction as noticed in recent times. It therefore, means that once the problem of economic poverty is aptly addressed, every other cause would have been addressed, to a large extent.
- The welfare of these professionals who have laid down their lives in the service of the nation and in the hazardous profession should be of top priority to the state as well as their organizations and must be reviewed as regularly as possible. Although expensive or capital intensive, the security of the state cannot be compromised. The welfare of the provider of this critical social service is therefore mandatory, while their residential quarters and turnout should be improved.
- All the relevant agencies and stakeholders involved with the provision of security must endeavour to sponsor regular interactive forum among the forces. Ignorance relating to the roles, organizational and rank structures of other forces, areas of cooperation and exclusivity etc were identified by the study to have caused some of the clashes. These can be resolved by such interactive forum.
- The government must ensure it empowers or formalize the role of the Military, Police and Paramilitary Public Relations' Officer's Forum [MILPOPPROF] which has already taken the bold initiative of forging harmonious relationship among the forces.

- Discipline is the hallmark of any security organization. The leadership of these forces must ensure that discipline is rightly enforced among the junior officers who for the nature of their roles are more visible than their commissioned officers. In a democratic polity such as ours, these security officers must learn to accord people of other profession the respect and dignity they deserve especially in their places of responsibilities. The forces must see the naked use of force always associated with the military regimes as belated and uncivilized mode of behaviour.
- Seniority or superiority struggles among the forces have no basis. The existence, roles and powers of these forces are products of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and other relevant Acts. The same constitution did not anywhere define seniority or superiority of the forces. The superiority or otherwise of the weapon used by these forces should not imply superiority of the users, but they should be seen in the light of the role they are meant to perform to the nation rather than defining the status of anyone carrying them. He that carries weapon should respect the person that does not, as no one carry any weapon outside official duties. Similarly, whatever the status of any security personnel, as soon as he/she meets another in his/her beat, such a personnel must be accorded due respect while on duty. Furthermore, officers and civilians as well should be seen as superiors in their own right and must be accorded their due respect and dignity while in their official working environment. In this way, superiority struggles will be checked not only among the security operatives, but also in all facets of our social lives, if democracy must be stabilized in Nigeria.
- After trying several forms of government, if Nigeria has settled for representative democracy as the best form of government for her citizens, then every segments of the Nigerian population must work for its success by respecting the tenets of democracy. Security agencies should be reoriented to dissociate themselves from the dark days of coercion and ignorance and strive to come to terms with modernity that will get Nigeria the needed recognition among comity of nations.
- The Police Acts of 1958 and 1990 present the constitutional responsibilities of the Nigeria Police to include among others the power/right to perform such military duties within and without Nigeria as may be required of them by relevant national authority (Asemota, 1993; Oditia, 1993; Nigeria Police, 2006). In the same vein, the Nigerian Army is saddled in part with the task of collaborating with the civil police to provide internal security to the nation and perform any other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly (Arabamen, 2004; Adebayo, 2004; Nigerian Army, 2006). From the foregoing it is safe to state that the founders of these forces envisaged the possibility of collaborative security roles from the very beginning. Therefore, the police and the army must seek to down play any organizational differences and develop operational synergy that will enhance the actualization of the expected national security.

Finally, if the major findings of this study, the conclusions and recommendations are appreciated and aptly considered, with regards to inter forces conflict particularly between the army and police personnel in Nigeria, a security sector that will engender sustainable democracy and the actualization of governmental programmes and development would have evolved. Furthermore, the battered image of the nation among the international community would be resuscitated while the forces will enjoy the support, patronage and cooperation of the civil population.

### **Conclusion**

Although this study revealed that several factors such as economic poverty, neglect, gross indiscipline and corruption precipitated the clashes between these dominant security forces, it is worthy of note that all the factors manifested through the abuse of the power and authority that the state conferred on the forces. Powers such as the right to arrest, carry weapon and use of force were conferred on these forces. These powers that were rarely checked by any institution enhanced the abuse and the conflict inherent in group interests. It was not surprising therefore, that soon after the transition to civil rule in 1999; there was a

popular desire to subject the police and other policing agencies to civilian oversight (Alemika, 2003; Chukwuma, 2003; Mckenzie, 2003) as one of the ways to enhance the performance and efficiency of the forces. Active and sustainable civilian oversight on the roles of these forces will no doubt be one of the major ways to check the persistent army-police clashes and thus solidify democratic culture in Nigeria.

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