POLICE IN THE COMMUNITY: PERCEPTIONS OF A GOVERNMENT AGENCY IN ACTION IN NIGERIA

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Over the past decades a truism has developed in studies of the police which, like most such bits of common sense, turns out to require substantial qualification. This is the notion that the public in general hold the police in fear and contempt, and that the police perception of this is a major factor in preventing improvement of police work.[1] For example, the first, and still definitive, text on police in the U.S. remarks on "the widely held belief . . . that our entire police organism is rotten from top to bottom, and from periphery to core . . . . that American police systems are beyond all hope of reconstruction, and that in the future, as in the past, they will merit little of public esteem . . . . perhaps a majority of Americans share that belief."[2] The police reaction to this is seen as reinforcing; one of the most recent studies notes that "most officers of all ranks seem to feel that their efforts are not well regarded or fully appreciated. Some carry this so far that they develop persecution complexes, verging on paranoia."[3]

A vast amount of survey research was undertaken in the aftermath of the upheavals in the past decade, attempting to examine American attitudes toward law and law enforcement; in particular the Presidential Commissions sponsored the most extensive such investigation and analysis ever done anywhere. Work is proceeding in other countries as well; a major survey, for example, has been done in London on attitudes to the police in various segments of the public.[4] These studies for the most part do not support the simple negative view of the police thought to be held by the public. Instead, they reveal an interesting ambivalence in attitudes toward the police, far different from the unremitting hostility often portrayed, although far from unquestioning support as well. As police forces everywhere attempt to deal with what is imagined to be public hostility, contempt, apathy, or misinformation, by establishing formal public relations programs, it is essential that the infinitely more complex nexus of police and public perceptions and evaluations of each other be properly conceived.[5]

> Relations between the police and the community cannot be understood unless the constraints on both sides are thoroughly explored. It is not enough to know that policement are sometimes rude and overbearing or that minority individuals are distrustful of authority and

sensitive to fancied slights. In order to understand interaction, one must understand the perspectives, attitudes, and emotions that participants on both sides bring to encounters.6

Despite the progress that is being made in delineating police—community relations in some countries, much remains to be done, both in the West and in the Third World. The deficiency is much greater in studies of police in developing countries, in part because so little work of any kind has been done on these police forces.7 A cursory examination of the literature turns up the same sort of impressionistic and unsupported statements on the images of the police that are now fortunately being debunked elsewhere. It is of course entirely possible that these impressions are correct and will be supported by survey data. The one extensive survey conducted so far, in India, did in fact

> reveal a profound public distrust of the police, especially with respect to their honesty and their impartiality. The familiar observation of public officials, scholars, and policemen themselves that the police are suspected of many kinds of improprieties is clearly borne out.8

Turning to Africa, we find a bleak consensus on the police. For example, one well—known (and admittedly severely critical) writer on African affairs has noted that

> everywhere people fear the police and their exactions, of which the most common form is imposition of fees for fictitious offences, the fees actually going into the pockets of the policemen. The police are regarded by the ordinary people as extortioners or even uniformed bandits.

And further,

> the police are among the worst offenders against the law. They levy illegal tolls on vehicles, especially the so-called mammy wagons which usually carry many more passengers than allowed and transgress a variety of minor regulations. They are allowed to proceed if they pay the policeman's private toll. There are innumerable cases of the police turning a blind eye to the activities of contrabandists, thieves and robbers in exchange for ransom. Sometimes they actively help the criminal . . . They guard effectively only the houses of the important people or of those who pay while ordinary citizens have to rely on self—defense. Unless he has committed his deed before the eyes of numerous witnesses or the victim has influential avengers, even a murderer may be left unmolested if he can afford an appropriate bribe. What is really astounding is that if he can pay a big sum, the police may even help him erase the traces of his crime by framing somebody quite innocent but helpless, and

getting him hanged.[9]

These harsh views of police in Africa in general find support in writings on the judicial and police systems of Nigeria, one of the most studied African nations in this respect.[10] Alan Milner, in discussing the Nigerian penal system, comments that

> it is unfortunate that in many Nigerian communities this
> relationship, which builds respect for sociolegal norms
> and for the police as supporters of these norms, does
> not exist: allegations of police dishonesty and brutality
> to suspects or witnesses are all too common . . . . Crime
> is often ignored, not reported or even concealed for fear
> of personal involvement with the police.[11]

In another study, Milner notes that relations between police and public are marked by police feelings of lack of respect and assistance from the public, and public emphasis on corruption and abuse from the force.[12]

Such comments are on the whole supported by T.N. Tamuno, author of the single major study on the Nigeria Police. Tamuno notes that there are numerous instances of friendly relations which are often ignored, but he devotes the majority of his chapter on public relations to police complaints against the public and public grievances about the police. He derives the former from commentary in the official police journal by two police officers who find the public to be discourteous and incivil, acting as though the police were their enemies. The much more frequently expressed public complaints against the police focus on "ruthlessness, brutality, and the use of violence," matters in which the public has a long memory and in which the "past activities of the police were decidedly against them;" "the police past in Nigeria was . . . associated with a reign of terror."[13] In addition, the continuing concern over police corruption, and public disgust over police inefficiency in prosecutions (the bulk of prosecutorial work being borne by the police) aggravate public distrust of police.[14]

Okonkwo took a similar stand in his legal text on the police and public in Nigeria, which begins with the assumption that police-public relations "cannot be said to be cordial." He remarks that "in many places people are still very much afraid of the police."[15]

Commentary by members of the Nigerian judicial system and by the police themselves takes the same bleak view. A Northern magistrate, writing a generally favourable report on the police as viewed from the bench, nevertheless notes that the police "are singled out for excessive criticisms only because their sphere of influence is much wider than that of any . . . other public servants."[16] A police officer comments in the Nigeria Police Magazine that the police have always tried to maintain cordial relations with the public, but are constantly rebuffed.

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> The Police had often come into bitter conflict with the
> public and the press and very rarely earned their
> praises . . . . The attitude of the average Nigerian to
> the Police is that of hostility instead of friendship
> and in the long run it is the Police who carries the
> blame.[17]

Such views were given an official imprimatur by the 1967 Gobir Report on the merger of the police, which commented that

> the Nigeria Police Force remains enigmatic in the eyes
> of the public. A growing estrangement of the Police
> Force from the public has caused a deep cleavage be-
> tween the two. This despicable image of the Police is
> partly attributable to bribery and corruption in the
> Force and partly to poor public relations. Public dis-
> gust emanates from crude and oppressive methods some-
> times adopted by the Police in investigating crimes, dis-
> regard for the comfort and convenience of the public in
> prosecutions, unwillingness to prevent disorder and a
> general inclination to criminate rather than assist mem-
> bers of the public. The Police have also realised their
> sinking public image and they are retrieving this through
> their Public Relations Section. However, a Police Pub-
> lic Relations Officer concerns himself mainly with pub-
> lic complaints against the Police rather than projecting
> the good image of the force.[18]

Finally, published views on the police carried in the Nigeri-
an press are nearly unanimous in their unfavorable aspect. The
headlines tell of "ordeal in police custody," "judge flays po-
lice," "it is improper for policemen to torture suspects," "be hu-
man to suspects," and "policemen attacked by angry villagers."[19]
Editorial comment notes that "it is a well-known fact that the
Nigerian public has not been as co-operative with the Nigeria Po-
lice as they should be." This is attributed to "an unhealthy re-
lationship between the police force and the public," in which "the
public believes, and perhaps rightly too, that the average police-
man in this country would resort to force at the least provocation
or even without any provocation. Psychologically therefore, most
individuals in the society see the police force as an emblem of
authorised brutality; and the policeman as an enemy, rather than a
friend and protector."[20] In response to this wave of printed hos-
tility, the police upgraded a small public relations branch and
merged it with the public relations and public complaints sections
of the state commands to create a new Public Relations Department
in Force Headquarters.[21] A yearly Police Day was instituted in
1973, to introduce the public to police activities in a pleasant
atmosphere.[22] Special programs depending on public assistance,
such as PMB A22 for the reporting of information about crimes for
a reward, were devised.[23]

In the face of such overwhelming agreement on, and action on,
a belief in public hostility to the police in Nigeria, it would
seem reasonable to conclude that the public view of the police in

Nigeria, unlike that of other nations, <u>is</u> uniformly negative. But is it?

Public Perceptions of the Police in Nigeria

Police-community relations can encompass a wide range of possible interactions, perceptions and evaluations. What the public and the police think and feel about each other reflects their own past experiences and the images transmitted through friends, education, the media, and popular stereotypes. The analysis that follows will focus on the public and their perceptions in two general areas: what the community thinks about the performance of the police force--how effectively and justly it carries out some of its major functions; and secondly, the feelings and evaluations the public has about the police and its relations to the community in which it works. The last section of the analysis will correlate some opinion areas to examine the impact of perceived performance of the police and their treatment of the public (either experienced personally or as generally believed by the respondent) on the evaluation of police-community relations. We expect that a high evaluation of performance and treatment will significantly upgrade the public's evaluation of the police. If this proves to be correct, then the clear implication for improving police-community relations is that a major share of the responsibility must fall on the police -- not only as a need to carry out specific public relations programs, but also as a need for each policeman to conduct each and everyencounter with the public in a strongly professional manner. It is this factor, how the police usually behave and are seen to behave, that is determining what the public thinks of the police.

The data reported are based on surveys conducted during the summer of 1975 in Kano (new town area); Bauchi, Biu and Mubi in the former Northeast State, and Ankpah town in Kwara State.[24] The conclusions about police-community relations in Nigeria that will be drawn from these data require some caution. We do not claim that the sample represents the general public in Nigeria as a whole, nor the towns where the surveys were conducted. Nor can we claim, since these are not probability samples, that the data will tell what specific groups or classes think. Rather, this is a beginning effort to cast some light on the generally accepted propositions about the public and the police that were cited earlier, in order to examine whether what is commonly thought in fact describes what the people interviewed think. If it does not, as we shall see it does not, then a restatement of the nature of police and public interaction is needed. Secondly, we think perceptions by the public of the police constitute an important datum, as attitudes toward the police may transfer to government generally and thereby affect its legitimacy, stability and capacity for development.[25] A fuller understanding of the politics of nation-building will require an understanding of the public impact of law enforcement; this study is a small step in that direction.

The interaction of police and public may occur in many ways and result in a number of overlapping evaluations by the public about the police. The tables that follow present perceptions of the general state of police-community relations, the degree of information about the police, willingness to come into contact with the police, causes of trouble between police and public, sentiments of fear or respect for the police, and perceived and experienced police treatment of the public.

Opinions on the state of relations between police and community are almost equally divided, with about 50% of the respondents characterizing them as excellent or good. Even if we assume that the choices labelled are not clearly distinguished by these respondents, still only 14% opt for the clearly unfavorable response (see Table I).

TABLE I

How would you describe the relations between your neighborhood and the police?a

Excellent	13%	(66)
Good	35%	(176)
Fair	37%	(183)
Poor	14%	(75)
Total:	99%	(500)

aData based on interviews in all five towns. There is some differentiation by area. Kano and Ankpah respondents add up to only 40% "poor" and "fair;" Mubi, Biu and Bauchi respondents' replies of "poor or "fair" add up to about 60%.

The degree of knowledge, as self-reported, is uniformly high, even if we acknowledge the potential for exaggeration (see Table II).

TABLE II

Information about the Police

	Police Stationa	NPF-NA Mergerb	Police Dayc
Yes	95% (292)	72% (358)	63% (315)
No	2% (7)	28% (136)	37% (185)

a"Do you know where a police station is located in this area?" Asked in Kano, Mubi, Ankpah. "Yes" indicates a correct identification.

b"Have you heard about the merger of the Nigeria Police and the NA Police?" Asked in all five towns.

c"Have you heard of the Police Day Programme which the police carry out once a year?" Asked in all five towns.

The police force does seem to be well known. This finding is reinforced by responses dealing with the public's willingness to come into contact with the police. 50% of all respondents state that they have a friend on the force. Questions asking about the willingness to report a crime or testify in court receive a strongly positive response (see Table III).

TABLE III

Willingness to come in contact with the police

	Report a crime[a]	Testify in court[b]
Yes	67% (334)	70% (211)
No	33% (164)	30% (89)

[a]"Have you reported or would you report any case of crime, suspicious incidents, or persons to the police?" Asked in all five towns. Kano has a much higher "yes" response, 82%, while Bauchi has a 51% "yes" response.

[b]"Would you generally be willing to testify as a witness in a court case?" Asked in Kano, Mubi, Ankpah.

The fact that the public is not strongly anti-police is also indicated by responses to a question dealing with the causes of trouble between police and public (see Table IV). Among these members of the public, almost the same percentage of respondents lays the blame for such troubles at the public's door (42%) as it does at the door of the police post (48%). Clearly opinion is divided and the public is rational or realistic enough not to blame every incident on police misconduct.

TABLE IV

Cause of police-public troubles[a]

Disrespect by the public for the police	14% (44)
Bad elements in the public that stir up trouble	28% (86)
Police who are strangers in the community	5% (16)
Mistreatment of the public by the police	43% (133)
The press exaggerating small problems	2% (7)
Other (please specify)	7% (19)

[a]"What do you think is the cause for troubles that sometimes happen between the police and the public?" Asked in Kano, Mubi, Ankpah.

When asked to express their feelings about the police, respondents divide their answers almost equally between respect, fear, and indifference (see Table V).

TABLE V

Feelings about the police

Feelings about the police[a]

Fear	26%	(79)
Respect	36%	(111)
Envy	3%	(8)
Indifference	31%	(97)
Other (please specify)	4%	(13)

Respect for police[b]

A great deal	49%	(241)
Some	37%	(181)
Hardly any	14%	(67)

Police deserve more respect[c]

Yes	49%	(150)
No	34%	(106)
Can't say	17%	(52)

[a]"When you think about the police generally, what feelings do you have about them?" Asked in Kano, Mubi, Ankpah.

[b]"How much respect do you have for the police in your neighbour-hood?" Asked in all five towns. Mubi and Ankpah have few "hard-ly any" responses.

[c]"Do you agree or disagree: The police deserve more respect and thanks than they get?" Asked in Kano, Mubi, Ankpah.

The answers to two other questions dealing with the respect the public has for the police are also more positive than negative. Only 14% answer that "hardly any" respect is felt for the police, as far as the respondents understand their own neighbourhoods, and only one-third disagree with the statement that the police deserve more respect and thanks than they get.

The least favorable response to the police, though still positive as a whole, relates to treatment--either experienced or perceived generally (see Table VI).

TABLE VI

Treatment of the public by the police

	Treatment of public[a]	Own treatment[b]
Politely and courteously	24% (117)	27% (51)
In a normal way	42% (207)	42% (79)
Harshly and arbitrarily	34% (169)	30% (57)

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a"How would you say the police usually treat people in this community?" Asked in all five towns; the tabulation excludes those who did not answer.

b"Have you ever had any contact with the police while they were doing their job?" IF YES: "How would you say you were treated by the police?" Includes all five towns. (The last choice was worded "harshly and made to feel small.")

About one-third of the respondents report that they have been treated rudely and have been embarrassed during contact situations, and a similar percentage thinks that this is how the police generally treat people. A bare majority (51%) agreed with "the opinion of some people that the police abuse and mistreat certain groups in this community?" While 27% disagree and 21% find themselves unable to say. When asked in a followup question which groups are discriminated against, three categories dominate. "Lower class" people comprise 37% of all mentions, "criminals" 26%, and the "uneducated" 15%. Other groups rank far below these: specific groups (touts, students, taxi drivers--generally named by themselves) receive 8%, "everybody" 7%, members of ethnic groups other than those of the police involved 2%, and disrespectful persons 1% (4% of the mentions defied classification). Clearly the public thinks that the police do not apply the law equally, "without fear or favor;" and that when they exercise their discretion they do so against groups that are the least powerful in the society--the uneducated who do not know thier rights, and the lower strata who do not have the influence to protect themselves against police misconduct.

The picture of police-community relations which emerges from these data is far from uniformly negative, and is much more positive (or neutral) than one would have expected from the sample of received wisdom on this subject. This generally high positive evaluation of police and community interactions, however, is not uniform in the specific evaluations that make up the overall picture.

A second opinion area examines these more specific ideas about police performance, and may be grouped into general evaluation, judgments of effectiveness in specific jobs, and views on the manner in which laws are administered.

In general, the evaluation of the police in its two major job categories, the maintenance of the peace and the prevention and solving of crime, is quite high (see Table VII).

TABLE VII

Performance of the police: general

	Keeping the peace[a]	Preventing crime[b]
Yes	72% (221)	70% (215)
No	16% (49)	17% (51)
No answer	13% (38)	14% (42)

[a]"How do you feel about this statement: In general, the police are doing a good job in this community in keeping the peace?" Asked in Kano, Mubi, Ankpah

[b]"How about this statement: In general, the police in this community are doing a good job in preventing and solving crime?" Asked in Kano, Mubi, Ankpah.

Comparing only the positive and negative answers a ratio of approximately four times as many positive as negative responses emerges. This picture changes drastically, however, when questions on specific job performance are asked (see Table VIII).

TABLE VIII

Performance of the police: specific

	Reasonable time[a]	Detain suspects[b]
Yes	29% (146)	61% (189)
No	54% (275)	22% (67)
Undecided	17% (87)	17% (52)

[a]"Do you agree or disagree with this: the police solve cases in a reasonable period of time, generally speaking?" Asked in all five towns.

[b]"Would you say that it is true that the police are likely to detain a suspect for a long time, generally speaking?" Asked in Kano, Mubi, Ankpah.

Twice as many people think that the police do not solve cases in a reasonable time as think that they do; and almost three times as many think that police detain suspects a long time as those who do not think so. The public's high evaluation of general job performance does not seem to be based on satisfaction with the way the police handle specific aspects of their work.

The last aspect of performance deals with the assessment of how equitably the police apply the law, whether in traffic regulation or in making arrests (see Table IX).

TABLE IX

Treatment of offenders by the police

	Traffic[a]	Suspects[b]
Yes	71% (218)	59% (182)
No	19% (59)	36% (112)
Undecided	10% (31)	5% (14)

[a]"Do you agree or disagree: In Nigeria today a small traffic offence committed by a man in a Mercedes is overlooked by the police; but a man on a machine who commits the same offence is arrested." Asked in Kano, Mubi, Ankpah.

[b]"Do police use rough language or abuse people physically when making arrests or questioning people, generally speaking?" Asked in Kano, Mubi, Ankpah.

A dominant majority think that the police enforce traffic laws selectively against less influential people. A strong majority also believes that the police in their handling of suspects and their questioning procedures are likely to engage in brutal actions, verbally or even physically. Clearly, this last table presents the most unfavorable perceptions of the police encountered so far; and the impact of seeing or thinking of the police as acting in unjust and brutal ways would seem to be substantial, for it is these police actions that translate the letter of the law into cold reality. And it is the personnel and character of the police themselves that implicitly are the causes for this strongly negative assessment of the application of the law, rather than any police policies or regulations.

This proposition is substantiated by the responses to the open-ended question, "What would be the best way to improve the police force?" Of total mentions, 27% (134) deal with improvement in the performance of the police, in essence suggesting that just carrying out the job in the way it is supposed to be done will be the best means of improving the force. 24% (118) deal with hiring more qualified, better educated or more highly trained personnel; 16% (78) mention the removal of corrupt officers; 12% (59) mention higher benefits, salaries or pensions; 8% (37) ask for changes in policy; 7% (34) want improvements in police public relations programs; and 6% (32) specify more resources or equipment, or greater numbers of police. The significant feature of these responses is that the first three, totalling 67% of all mentions, deal with improvements in police personnel themselves. It should be noted that public relations programs per se are not a widely supported means of improving the police force. For the police to improve its public standing changes in performance will go much further than programs aimed at educating the public on the virtues of the force.

This last argument is validated by cross-tabulating percep-
tions of police performance, in both general and specific aspects,
with police-community relations. There is a strong and direct re-
lationship between these in all cases, with the single exception
that judgment of how fairly police treat traffic offenders is not
related to how one feels about the police or the state of police-
community relations. With that one exception--and that only in
the sense that the relationship is not as strong as in the other
variables, though the direction is the same--having a negative
opinion of police performance and how the police force treats the
public is associated with a negative evaluation of police-communi-
ty relations (see Tables X, XI, XII).

It cannot be inferred from these data which of these sets of
variables precedes the other; but this does not affect the main
argument, that the attitudes and the feelings of the public to-
wards the police are interrelated; the people's judgments of per-
formance and their evaluations of the police and their interac-
tions with them go together. Two of these associations may under-
score this point.

How the police treat the public generally: the images people
have of police behavior and what police contact means to them in
terms of embarrassment, helpfulness, or service, is strongly re-
lated to personal experience during contact situations. Respond-
ents group themselves into a consistent pattern in which stereo-
type and experience form a reinforcing structure of images. Two-
thirds in the polite and the rude experience categories are in the
right cell; and only one out of ten is completely reversed in his
judgment of the police.

Another important association deals with the willingness to
assign responsibility for occasional troubles and misunderstand-
ings between the police and the public. If we can assume that
many encounters which end in animosity begin in confusion or even
amity, and that the blame for the dispute is assigned by condition-
ed hindsight all too frequently, then the jump in willingness to
blame the police that is associated with a negative evaluation of
performance and treatment presents a grave problem for police com-
munity-relations; the reality of a difficult encounter will be
overridden by preconceptions and expectations. No matter how the
police behave, or who is really at fault, they will be blamed.

The two main arguments of this paper can now be restated. The
first is that the interactions between police and public are not
as uniformly bad as nearly all commentators would lead us to be-
lieve. The public differentiates various aspects of police behav-
ior and is clearly able to assess them separately. And, second,
improvements in relations between the police force and the public
it serves would seem to be possible through changes in police en-
counters and the public images which those create. As Wilson has
argued about the US,

TABLE X

POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS BY POLICE PERFORMANCE

	Treatment of Public (c)			Respect for Police (d)			Causes of Trouble (e)		Police-Community Relations (f)			
	Polite	Normal	Rude	Great deal	Some	Hardly any	Public	Police	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
(a) Keeping the peace												
Agree	22% (48)	58% (125)	20% (44)	65% (142)	32% (69)	4% (8)	56% (107)	24% (84)	21% (46)	43% (95)	31% (69)	5% (10)
Disagree	6% (3)	17% (8)	77% (37)	21% (10)	50% (24)	29% (14)	21% (9)	79% (33)	6% (3)	17% (8)	40% (19)	36% (17)
(b) Preventing crime												
Agree	23% (47)	58% (121)	20% (41)	64% (142)	32% (69)	4% (8)	56% (104)	44% (82)	21% (44)	44% (93)	31% (67)	5% (10)
Disagree	8% (4)	26% (13)	66% (33)	21% (10)	50% (26)	29% (15)	33% (15)	67% (30)	8% (4)	18% (9)	44% (22)	30% (15)

(a) Question 1, Table VII

(b) Question 2, Table VII

(c) Question 1, Table VI

(d) Question 2, Table V

(e) Question in Table IV. The first and second fixed answers have been combined into the "public" rubric. "Police" is the fourth answer.

(f) Table I

TABLE XI

POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS BY POLICE PERFORMANCE (SPECIFIC)

	Treatment of Public (c)			Respect for Police			Causes of Trouble		Police-Community Relations			
	Polite	Normal	Rude	Great deal	Some	Hardly any	Public	Police	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
(a) Reasonable time												
Agree	23%(22)	64%(60)	13%(12)	63%(60)	33%(32)	4%(4)	58%(45)	42%(33)	24%(23)	49%(47)	24%(23)	2%(2)
Disagree	14%(23)	41%(69)	45%(76)	44%(74)	42%(71)	15%(25)	40%(61)	60%(91)	12%(20)	30%(51)	40%(65)	18%(31)
(b) Traffic												
Agree	16%(34)	51%(108)	33%(70)	50%(107)	38%(83)	12%(26)	46%(88)	54%(104)	14%(30)	34%(74)	38%(81)	14%(31)
Disagree	12%(7)	47%(27)	41%(24)	59%(35)	34%(20)	7%(4)	49%(25)	51%(26)	22%(13)	46%(27)	29%(17)	3%(2)

(a) Question 1, Table VIII
(b) Question 1, Table IX
(c) Columns same as Table X

TABLE XII

POLICE-COMMUNITY RELATIONS BY TREATMENT

	Treatment of Public (c)			Respect for Police			Causes of Trouble		Police-Community Relations			
	Polite	Normal	Rude	Great deal	Some	Hardly any	Public	Police	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
(a) Own treatment												
Polite	62%(18)	24%(7)	14%(4)	55%(27)	37%(18)	8%(4)	63%(29)	37%(17)	29%(14)	37%(18)	27%(13)	8%(4)
Normal	27%(25)	58%(53)	14%(13)	37%(28)	44%(34)	8%(6)	52%(34)	48%(32)	15%(12)	41%(32)	40%(31)	4%(3)
Rude	10%(6)	27%(17)	63%(40)	46%(26)	32%(18)	23%(13)	27%(14)	73%(37)	5%(3)	30%(17)	39%(22)	26%(15)
(b) Public treatment												
Polite				77%(39)	22%(11)	2%(1)	70%(33)	30%(14)	37%(18)	31%(15)	27%(13)	6%(3)
Normal				54%(81)	42%(63)	4%(6)	58%(74)	42%(52)	14%(21)	47%(71)	38%(57)	2%(3)
Rude				38%(36)	38%(36)	23%(22)	23%(19)	77%(65)	13%(12)	26%(24)	32%(30)	30%(28)

(a) Question 2, Table VI

(b) Question 1, Table VI

(c) Column headings same as Table X

> the relations between police and citizen are a result
> of the effort of the police to attain their major ob-
> jectives - crime prevention, crime apprehension and
> order maintenance. How the citizen feels about the
> police officer results from his evaluation of the of-
> ficer's performance of his principal duties. ...The
> chief police implication is that police community
> relations cannot be substantially improved by programs
> designed to deal with the citizen in a setting other
> than encounters with the police.[26]

This argument holds true for Nigeria as well.

NOTES

1. The majority of studies of the police have been carried out in the United States, particularly in the 1960s, and this general comment thus arises from the particular dimensions of police and community relations in America, which are beset with the problems of both a plural society and a federal polity.

2. Bruce Smith, Police Systems in the United States (2nd rev. ed., New York: Harper and Brothers, 1960), pp. 2 - 3.

3. Robert F. Steadman, "Introduction," The Police and the Community, ed., Robert F. Steadman ("Committee for Economic Development Supplementary Paper," Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1972), p. ix.

4. See for example Task Force on the Police, The President's Commission on Law Enforcement and The Administration of Justice, Task Force Report: The Police (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967); David H. Bayley and Harold Mendelsohn, Minorities and the Police: Confrontation in America (New York: The Free Press, 1968); David J. Bordua (ed.), The Police: Six Sociological Essays (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1967); Jerome H. Skolnick, Justice without Trial: Law Enforcement in Democratic Society (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966); William A. Westley, Violence and the Police (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970); Albert J. Reiss, Jr., The Police and the Public (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971); James Q. Wilson, Varieties of Police Behavior: The Management of Law and Order in Eight Communities (New York: Atheneum, 1970); President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, Field Survey IV: Police and the Community (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967); John E. Angell, et. al., A National Survey of Police-Community Rela-

tions (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1967).
On the U.K., see Anthony Judge, A Man Apart: The British Po-
liceman and His Job (London: Arthur Barker, Ltd., 1972);
Michael Banton, The Policeman in the Community (New York:
Basic Books, 1965); J.O. Martin and G. Wilson, The Police:
A Study in Manpower (London: Heinemann, 1969); William A.
Belson, The Public and the Police (London: Harper and Row,
1975). An interesting comparison is D. Chappell and P.R.
Wilson, The Police and The Public in Australia and New Zea-
land (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1969).

5. On police-community relations programs, see Joseph Fink and
Lloyd G. Sealey, The Community and the Police--Conflict or
Cooperation? (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1974). A
typical textbook on the subject is Police-Community Relations,
by Paul F. Cromwell, Jr. and George Keefer (St. Paul, Minn.:
West Publishing, 1973).

6. Bayley and Mendelsohn, p. iii.

7. On police in the Third World, see Marshall B. Clinard and
Daniel J. Abbott, "The Police and Prisons in the Developing
Countries," in Crime in Developing Countries: A Comparative
Perspective (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1974); William
Clifford, "Training for Crime Control in the Context of Na-
tional Development," International Review of Criminal Policy,
XXIV (1966); David H. Bayley, "The Police and Political
Change in Comparative Perspective," Law and Society Review,
VI:I (August 1971); Fred Dubow, "Nation Building and the Im-
position of Criminal Law," American Sociological Association,
1974; Christian P. Potholm, "The Multiple Roles of the Police
as Seen in the African Context," The Journal of Developing
Areas, III (January 1969); and David H. Bayley, The Police
and Political Development in India (Princeton: Princeton
University Press, 1969).

8. Bayley, The Police and Political Development in India, p. 218.

9. Stanislav Andreski, The African Predicament (New York: Ather-
ton Press, 1968), pp. 93, 98-99.

10. See Alan Milner, "The Maintenance of Public Order in Nigeria,"
The Politics and Administration of Nigerian Government, ed.
L. Franklin Blitz (New York: F.A. Praeger, 1965); Alan
Milner, The Nigerian Penal System (London and Lagos: Sweet
and Maxwell, and African Universities Press, 1972); O.
Ohonbamu, "The Dilemma of Police Organization under a Federal
System: The Nigerian Experience," Nigerian Law Journal, VI
(1972); F.E. Oyakhilome, "Police Impression of the Magistrate,"
M. Muhammed, "Magisterial Impression of the Police," and O.A.
Adeyemi, "A Day in the Criminal Court," in The Nigerian Magis-
trate and the Offender, ed. T.O. Elias (Benin: Ethiope Pub-
lishing, 1972); R.E. Ezekiel-Hart (ed.), Keepers of the Peace:
Facts About the Nigeria Police Force (Lagos: 1962); W.R. Shir-

ley, History of the Nigeria Police (Lagos: 1948); Cyprian O. Okonkwo, The Police and the Public in Nigeria (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1966), and T.N. Tamuno, Police in Modern Nigeria, 1861-1965 (Ibadan: University of Ibadan Press, 1970). To give the reader a brief review of the Nigeria Police Force as background for the discussion to follow, a few basic features should be noted. The Nigeria Police Force is presently a federal government responsibility, providing the only police services for the entire federation. It is organized on federal lines with a division by functions in both state and federal commands overlapping this. There is a command in each state (now nineteen), under the control of the Inspector-General of Police in Lagos, who is a Federal Military Government appointee. This replaces the earlier dual police, in which local authorities had their own forces (in the former Northern Region, this constituted the great bulk of police forces). The forces were merged during 1968-1972. The present strength of the NPF is roughly 45,000, which is a police/population ratio of only 1:1,800 (1963 census). Under the Third Development Plan an increase to 80,000 was projected by 1980, with a capital expenditure during 1975-1980 of nearly half a billion dollars, more than ten times that of the second development plan. (Third National Development Plan 1975-80, Vol. I, p. 328; Lagos: Central Planning Office, Federal Ministry of Economic Development, 1975).

11. Milner, The Nigerian Penal System, p. 2.

12. Milner, "The Maintenance of Public Order in Nigeria," pp. 192-202.

13. Tamuno, p. 253.

14. Tamuno, pp. 255-63.

15. Okonkwo, pp. v, 7.

16. Muhammad, p. 78.

17. Tundo Olufon, "Police, Public and Press," Nigeria Police Magazine, New Series Nos. 17 and 18 (June-December 1973), p. 36.

18. Working Party on Police and Prisons: Report (Lagos: 1967), paragraphs 95-97. The view of police public relations programs is a very narrow one.

19. New Nigerian, 2 March 1974; Daily Times, 3 May 1974, 23 May 1974, 8 February 1975; New Nigerian, 4 December 1975.

20. Daily Times, 15 October 1973, and 29 November 1974.

21. "Public Relations Department," Nigerian Police Magazine, New Series Nos. 7-14 (1971-1972), p. 33.

22. "First Police Day," Nigeria Police Magazine, New Series Nos. 17 and 18 (June-December 1973), p. 17.

23. "Launching of PMB A22," Nigeria Police Magazine, New Series Nos. 7-14 (1971-1972), pp. 56-57; Daily Times, 12 October 1973. This is a post office box to which any individual may report information about criminal activities in secret. Police reported 85% of the items that were received in the first year to be of use.

24. The survey was administered on the basis of stratified quota samples, interviewers (final years students at ABU, natives of the towns in which they were asked to work) being asked to select 20 respondents each in five occupational categories grouped into a national bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, working class, peasantry and lumpenproletariat class structure, with age and sex as sub-categories. See G.M. Nzongola, "The Bourgeoisie and the Revolution in the Congo," Journal of Modern African Studies, VIII: 4 December 1970), pp. 511-530 for the particulars of this organizing scheme.

Ideally, the sample should have been drawn on a probability basis, yet this requirement is impossible to fulfill for a survey of the Nigerian public as a whole. There are no valid census data for the population of the country or for towns. The number and SES stratification of the nation-wide or the town populations is not known. There are no lists from which a random sample could be drawn. Even valid quota samples depend on some known distribution of traits in the population and this distribution can only be estimated for Nigeria.

The problem the researcher faces is to protect his statistical procedures at all costs with the result that no surveys (except for extremely limited populations such as university students) are possible, or try to come as close as practically possible to the ideal standard and report his findings honestly on that basis. The method adopted to draw the sample is not the best possible but, we feel, is generally representative and our inferences on the state of public opinion are reasonable (in the light of our and others' experience in Nigeria), though we cannot assign a precise statistical value to this conviction. For a discussion of sampling problems and procedures similar to ours see the Foreword in Margaret Peil, (London: Cassell, 1976).

The questionnaire was translated into Hausa (and checked by back-translation) and the administration was in English or Hausa depending on the respondent's preference. Some English questionnaires were self-administered; all Hausa questionnaires were given orally by the interviewer. In Mubi some of the interviews were in Bura, the local language, and in Ankpa town some questionnaires were asked in Igala. The translation of these questionnaires was discussed with the interviewers, both native speakers. Interviewers were trained be-

fore being sent into the field and extensively debriefed after their field work.

The numbers reported for various tables differ since two slightly different instruments were used. The contingency tables in the last section are based on 308 questionnaires completed in Kano, Mubi and Ankpa. Differences in response patterns between towns are generally quite small; in the few cases where they are large, this has been indicated in the tables.

The SES of the respondents break down as follows: most of them are below the age of 35, male, have a primary or secondary education, and belong by occupation to the petty bourgeoisie. By national population characteristics, as far as they can be estimated, the bourgeoisie is heavily over-represented and the peasantry under-represented, basically because this is an urban population. It should be noted, however, that family backgrounds are closely tied to the peasantry; even among the small elite group that is the university student population the dominant occupation of fathers is farming.

25. For an attempt to establish the theoretical foundations for this proposition, see Otwin Marenin and Marshall Carter, "The Police and Nation-Building," Conference on Social Research and National Development in Nigeria, Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of Ibadan, September 1975.

26. James Q. Wilson, "The Police in the Ghetto," in Steadman, p. 68.

RESUME

La plupart des études existantes concernant les relations entre la police et les citoyens au Nigéria et plus généralement en Afrique présente une impression presqu'uniformément négative. Les données que présente cet article mettent en question le bien-fondé de ces observations et démontrent que l'évaluation par le public du rôle et des activités de la police au Nigéria est plus positive que ne le suggèrent les idées reçues. D'autre part, le public au Nigéria évalue différement l'action de la police dans différents domaines. L'article démontre une association étroite entre l'expérience vécue de l'individu et son évaluation de la police.