



# Public Perception of Police Brutality in Oyi Local Government Area of Anambra State

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**Abstract:** This study is based on Public Perception of Police Brutality in Oyi Local Government Area. This study adopts the following research questions, to ascertain how police brutality is perceived by residences of Oyi L.G.A, to identify prevailing forms of police brutality in Oyi L.G.A, to ascertain residents reaction towards police brutality in Oyi L.G.A, to identify different measures that can be adopted to minimize the level of police brutality in Oyi L.G.A. The descriptive survey research design was adopted. The theoretical foundation was anchored on the deviance police subculture theory. The total population of 400(four hundred) was given while 376 (three hundred and seventy six) was used in the analyses after administering the questionnaire. Four research questions were used for the study. Analyses were made through the latest version of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) a well known software for the statistical data analyst, to that effect conclusion can be drawn while the Chi-square was used to test the hypotheses. The findings from the study shows that due to the prevailing acts of brutality in the area, residents of Oyi LGA perceived the Nigerian Police Force in bad light and as a result showing unhealthy disposition towards the force. The study recommends that the Nigerian Inspector General of Police (IGP) should set up a disciplined taskforce that should embark on police monitoring across the nation and ensure that their reports are implemented. This is in view of the fact that this would make many of the men of the force to be up and doing, bearing in mind that extra eyes are somewhere watching his dealings. The study concludes that the police in Oyi L.G.A are still indulging in acts of brutality against residents and that this may not only continue unabated, but could mar government efforts in trying to restore security in the country.

**Keyword:** Public Perception, police brutality, Nigerian Police Force, Oyi L.G.A

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

The police institution is a generic human service establishment saddled principally with the task of safe guarding the internal security and safety of almost every civil societies (Ajayi and Longe, 2015). In Nigeria, the police are officials of government and society responsible for the prevention and control of crimes and disorders as well as the detection, apprehension and prosecution of perpetrators of crimes and violence in the country. As such, there is

probably no other security organization that has an intimate dealing with the large segment of the Nigerian populace as the police.

Police officers have been granted the privilege of using non-negotiable coercive force (Bittner,1970) to control citizens behavior and ensure public order. While the authority to use such force is not a problem, its proper application is the central problem of contemporary police misconduct (kerstetter,1985).

Reiss (1971) defines police brutality as any practice that degrades citizen status, “that restricts their freedom and that annoys or harasses them,” or that uses unnecessary and unwarranted physical force. Building on this definition, police brutality is seen as the citizens’ judgment that they have not been treated with full rights and dignity by police as expected in a democratic society. According to Wallace (2010), police brutality refers to the intentional use of excessive force by a police officer against a victim or victims that are deemed to go beyond the level required to sustain life, avoid injury or control a situation. This excessive force may be physical such as; torture, bullying, misuse of fire arms, use of teargas against peaceful protesters, extortion of crime victims and motorist, unlawful detention, sexual abuse( in case of female victim), etc. It can also be psychological such as threatening to kill or injure, verbal abuse and other psychological traumas such as depression, restlessness, etc that might result from police use of excessive force or violent acts.

At the global level, police brutality is fueled by racism. Racism refers to bias held against a person or group of people because of their race or ethnicity (Cuncic, 2021). This is where police officers use more force and arbitrariness when dealing with a particular race who is being labeled as notorious or deadly criminals, than others. Race based police brutality is predominant in several European countries especially the United States where police brutality is usually felt most by the” Blacks” a particular race in the United States. For example, Breonna Taylor a 26 years old black woman was shot in her apartment on March 13, 2020 in Louisville, Kentucky by a white police officer and she didn’t survived it. Also George Floyd a 46 years old black man was shot on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 in Minneapolis, Minnesota and died after a white police officer knelt on his neck (Lustik, Jan 17, 2021). He also, opined that the risk of being killed as a result of excessive use of force by the police in the United States varies by racial and ethnic group membership. Specifically, Black Men and Women of American/ Alaska Native and Latin American Native than their White counterparts like the Asian/ Pacific Islander Natives, where shown to have a higher lifetime risk of dying due to police brutality.

In Nigeria, there are inexhaustible cases of police brutality. For instance, on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2021, the police used teargas and water canon to disperse Yoruba Nation Protesters in Lagos. During the same protest, a straying bullet fired by a police officer killed a 14 years old girl( BBC News, July 3,2021); On the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2020, a 27 year old 500Level law student of Nnamdi Azikiwe University was shot dead in a beer parlor by a police officer ( Business Day News, May 4,2020); On 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020, a 27 years old man was killed by a policeman in Imo State for not wearing a facemask (Business Day News, July 9,2020), and several other cases.

As a matter of fact, the upsurge of police brutality in Nigeria can be attributed to institutional deficiencies. Institutional problems such as the “Blue wall of silence” in the police force. This as Ugwoke (2015) noted, can manifest in the form of abetting or supporting crimes committed by fellow police officer. It is no doubt that in Nigeria, cases of police brutality are rarely prosecuted or punished as a result of police officers or their disciplinary unit( the police service commission) which should have reported or followed up the misconduct including police brutality are either covering it up or denying it. For instance, in 2019, in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja, some women who were arrested during a police raid alleged that they were being raped while in detention by police officers. They stated that the police officers accused them of being sex workers and while they were at the station, they were repeatedly raped by some police officers. However, the Nigerian police force denied this allegation and never tried the officers at their disciplinary unit (Njemanze, 2019).

Furthermore, poor medical examination and psychological testing of police officers at their various police institutions have also contributed to police brutality in Nigeria. The mental health and psychological construct of individual police officers to a greater extent will determine how such officer will respond to certain event or occurrence within his/her immediate environment. Police officers with certain personality traits such as aggressiveness, etc or personality disorder such as; post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), Anti-social personality disorder (ASPD), low agreeableness, neuroticism among others are more likely to over-react and use deadly force when not necessary( Cuncic,2021). It was on this ground that the Former Inspector General of police, Mohammed Adamu ordered the personnel of the disbanded Special Anti- Robbery Squad (SARS) to report to the force Headquarter, Abuja on the 13<sup>th</sup> of October,2020 for debriefing, psychological and medical examination in order to lessen the level of brutality perpetrated by them on innocent citizen(Enengedi,2020). Other institutional problems that causes police brutality include poor training, poor monitoring of police activities, recruitment of unqualified personnel, corruption, power struggle within the rank and file in the force, among others.

The brutality of the Nigerian police force has not only kept the citizens complaining but also have led to violent protest such as the recent End SARS protest in the country. There has been other instances where the public react angrily towards the police officers by engaging them in a fight, over power them, confiscate police weapon, storm police armory and most times set police stations ablaze. Furthermore, perceived police brutality has equally spurred up the setting up other alternatives policing arrangements such as vigilant groups, private security companies by the members of the public, in which the public see as more friendly and safe than the police.

In Oyi local government Area, there has been uncountable records of police brutality more especially the notorious Awkuzu SARS, a special police unit where many young men and women have either disappeared or lost their lives at hands of the police personnel. It is alleged that the facility walls and ground of this police is soaked with the blood of suspects. On July 2017, the International society for Civil Liberties and the Rule of law, accused the Special Anti Robbery Squad Awkuzu command of being responsible for the 35 corpse

discovered in the Ezu River, Amansea. In fact, the notoriety of the men of the Nigerian Police Force has made Damian Ugwu, Amnesty International Nigeria Researcher to describe them as getting rich through their brutality ( Thisday News, October 20,2020)

It's against the backdrop of these problems that this study investigated the public perception of police brutality in Oyi local government Area.

## **1.2 Statement of problem**

Police brutality has been a major problem confronting the Nigerian populace. The police force, which has been entrusted with protecting lives and properties, have constantly abused their powers. They often use force beyond the limit permissible by law, infringing on the rights of innocent civilians and causing a lot of harm and pain to citizens of Nigeria (Glow Team,2020).

The culture of arbitrariness, ruthlessness and brutality persistent in the Nigerian police force has marred the image of the Nigerian police force at the global level. For instance, the Nigerian police force is ranked as the 3<sup>rd</sup> most brutal police force in the world (World internal security and police index,2017). Also, police brutality and other human right abuses by Nigerian security agencies including the police force have affected Nigeria's diplomatic ties ( especially on security expertise) with other international communities such as the United States. This is evident when the Buhari led federal government on 10<sup>th</sup> of April, 2021 cried out to the United States for security assistance at the spark of unknown gunmen attacks on police stations and other security formations in Nigeria. The United States through its former Ambassador to Nigeria John Campbell refused this assistance on the grounds of re-occurring police brutality and several other human right abuses perpetrated by Nigerian Security operatives with the police inclusive ( Sahara Reporters, April 10,2021).

Furthermore, the unfriendliness that exist between the public and the police as a result of police brutality also causes difficulty in investigating crimes. People who ordinary would have served as an eyewitness to a crime incidence or help in producing material evidence for easy investigation of crimes are scared to approach the police or have anything to do with the police as a result of fear of being brutalized by the police . As a matter of fact, many criminal cases have died off either at their investigation stage in the hand of the police or in the court as a result of difficulty in investigating the crime.

In Oyi local government area, there has been many cases of police brutality which has manifested in the form of police extortion, rape, physical and psychological assaults, unlawful detention, invasion of people's residence and business premises, sporadic shooting of protesters, etc. Police brutality as a matter of fact have negatively affected public opinion about the police in Oyi local government area of Anambra State. It has not only undermined public trust but also have created a long distance relationship between the police and the residents of Oyi. This as it is, has made the residents to resort to jungle justice instead of reporting crimes to the police. For instance, on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021, a suspected thief was lynched by a mob at Oye-agu, a village in Akwuzu, Oyi local government Area ( Punch News, May

21,2021). Thus, the effectiveness of the police in discharging their duties in Oyi local government have become questionable.

Again, the residents of Oyi local government Area now live in palpable fear and terror and greets the police with hatred because they perceive the police as inept, corrupt and high-handed and never sees them as allies or friends. The police in the Oyi local government area, most times torture alleged suspect to death. They have also unlawfully detained innocent residents. In fact, many innocent people have died as a result of police brutality in Oyi Local government. One can say that there is no day that passes by without the police carrying out one form of police brutality against residents of Oyi or the other. This has made the slogan “police is your friend” an irony in Oyi local government area since residents of Oyi now live in fear of the police more than the criminals.

It’s against this situation that this study investigated the public perception of police brutality in Oyi local government area of Anambra State.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. How is police brutality perceived in Oyi local government area?
2. What are the instruments used by the Nigerian police to brutalize residents of Oyi local government area?
3. How do members of the public react to police brutality in Oyi local government area?
4. What are measures to be applied to reduce police brutality in Oyi local government area?

### **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The general objective of this study is to investigate the public perception of police brutality in Oyi local government; this objectives was achieved through these specific aims;

1. To ascertain how police brutality is perceived by the people of Oyi local government area.
2. To identify the different instruments adopted by the Nigerian police in brutalizing residents of Oyi local government area.
3. To find out the reactions of members of the public against police brutality in Oyi local government area.
4. To identify different measures that can be adopted to minimize the level of police brutality in Oyi local government area.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Conceptual Review**

#### **2.1.1 The Concept of Perception of Police Brutality**

According to Cooper (2015), police brutality is the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual against a person, or against a group or community that either result in

or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal-development, disabilities or deprivation. Police brutality has occurred across all the world and it still a major concern amongst societies and police organization (Thompson 2004) .

Withrown (2005), noted that the concept of perception of police brutality is a very ambiguous one. This is because one person perception of police brutality could be completely different from another person's understanding of police brutality. For instance, many people think that police excessive force(brutality) is used to prevent crime why others may think it is for the molestation of the citizens. This was in line with the opinion of Frank (2005), that the perception of police brutality originates from individual judgments based on attributes of personal contacts and the behavior of officers interactions, or specific attitudes, as well as from broader perceptions about the occupation of police general attitudes. These perceptions are sociologically important for two reasons. First, police are always situation ally correct and have the authority to make people do things in a given situation. Therefore, certain measures used to compel conformity could be perceived as police brutality( Bitner 1970). Secondly, personal experience with police is the most significant determinant of the general perception towards the police.

On his own part, Wu(2009), noted that public perception of police brutality is vital because how the public conceptualizes and evaluates the local police can directly shape the way they respond to the police, the political support and cooperation they render to the police, and their willingness to participate in police and community anti-crime program and efforts. He further noted that the perception of police brutality is a very sensitive one especially in the contemporarily democratic society.

Reiss(1968), pointed out that what citizens mean by police brutality covers the full range of police practices and behaviors that undermine the rights and dignity owed to the citizens in a democratic society. He went further to state that popular perception of police brutality in a democratic society include; the use of profane and abusive language, commands to move on or get or get home, stop and questioning citizens on the street, threats to use force if not obeyed, prodding with a nightstick or approaching with a pistol and the actual use of force.

Again, Conkling (2019), state that exposure to media coverage and highly publicized incidents of police misconduct have also been found to negatively impact the perception of the police. Most times what goes viral and reach massive audience especially in the case of police brutality incidents caught on video, could have a very negative widespread consequences on the perception of police brutality by the public.

On his own part, Dicker(1998), suggest that one concept that influences the public perception of police brutality is the idea of the "blue thin line". In policing, the blue thin line represents the boundary between the police officers and citizens.



Moreso, Christopher(1991), revealed that the perception of police brutality by the public is one manifestation of the often troubled relationship between the police and the communities they are supposed to serve and protect. This was in line with the opinion of Williams(1998), that perception of police brutality by the public have attracted poor public opinion about the police and have distort the image of the police due to their inefficiency, culture of brutality, lack of accountability and lack of training.

Paine and Gainey (2007), noted that perception of police brutality are affected by prior contact, age, social class, gender, race or ethnicity, etc. They argued that those who have personal contact with the police perceive the police as brutal than those who have no contact with the police. With regard to age, younger individuals have less favourable attitude or perception than older individuals ( Dukes and Hughes 2004; Rensing and Correria 1997; Kusow et al 1997). On social class, individuals from economically disadvantage neighborhood perceives the police as more brutal compared with those from economically advantage neighbourhood, with regard to gender, women have a little favourable attitude towards the police compared to men. In terms of race or ethnicity, both blacks and Hispanics reported heightened perception of police brutality (Weitzer and Tuch 2004) and lower rates of satisfaction with the police (Geistman and Smith 2007; Garcia and Can 2005) , than their white counterparts.

## **2.2 Review of Related Theory**

The deviant police sub-culture theory was coined by Ugwoke( 2015), from the sub-culture theory of deviance propounded by Albert Cohen(1981) and Richard Cloward(2001). The sub-cultural theory of deviance posits that deviance is a function of a culture of sub-group which deviates from the dominant culture in the society. This as Ugwoke(2015), noted that among different sub-groups including formal organizations ( like the police), there are usually sub-cultures that promotes cohesion and solidarity among members. Such cultures have the capability of contributing to either the failure or success of the group. Deviant Police subculture is usually obtainable when a group of officers who have a distinctive set of customs, rules, morality and a strong feeling of loyalty, actively encourages and support police misconducts. It is obvious that many young men are good at the point of their recruitment into the police, but soon become socialized into a deviant subculture during and after their orientation. This deviant police sub-culture can be responsible for the build-up of “blue wall of silence in cases indicting a police officer for a specific misconduct including police brutality.

These delinquent police subcultures are assumed to be

- Non-tutilitarian: The deviant actions are not committed on the basis of economic rationality.
- Malicious: The purpose of delinquent acts is to annoy or even injure others.

- Negativistic: Criminal acts are committed precisely because of their prohibition in order to consciously reject conventional values.

This theory is relevant to this study in the sense that it expound on the activities of various sub-group or sub-cultures within the police institution. In this sub-culture, police officers re-socialize and internalize values, beliefs and practices that encourages police brutality and which goes contrary to their occupational and organizational ethics of conduct, rules and regulations. The membership of this sub-group requires hiding each other's misconducts especially brutality against the civilians. Also, the activities of this bad eggs have significantly marred the image of entire police institution. Because of their violent acts towards the public, the entire police organization is now perceived as brutal.

This theory comes under the following criticisms

- This theory was criticized on the ground that the deviants in the sub-culture did not totally reject the dominant culture rather, they over conform to their own values, norms, beliefs, etc.
- Theorist of sub-culture theory fails to provide strategies for solution to this deviant sub-culture.
- It only focuses on the bad eggs as the master mind of police brutality while neglecting other high risk factors that contributes to police brutality such as inadequate implementation of disciplinary actions against police brutality, poor psychological testing of police officers before recruitment, strains from police work.

### **2.3. Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework of this study is hinged on Deviant police sub-culture theory. The deviant police sub-culture theory was coined by Ugwoke (2015). It is an offshoot of sub-culture theory of deviant and crime propounded by Albert Cohen(1981) and Richard Cloward (2001). Ugwoke (2015) noted that among different sub-groups including formal organizations(like the police), there are usually sub-cultures that promotes cohesion and solidarity among members. Such cultures have the capability of contributing to either the failure or success of the group. This deviant police sub-culture can be responsible for the build-up of blue wall of silence in cases indicting a police officer for a specific misconduct including police brutality.

This theory is most relevant to this study in the sense that it covers the gap left by the other two theories that is,, the symbolic interactionism and the general strain theory of crime. While these two only focused only on individual police officers, the deviant police sub-culture theory went deeper by exploring the activities of deviant



groups or bad eggs which have significantly marred the image of the overall police institution.

This theory also explores on one of the major reasons why police brutality is predominant in Nigeria. And that is the issue of the blue wall of silence, a situation where police officers protect each other's atrocities when they commit indictable offences such as brutalizing people.

Moreso, this theory is vital in explaining other institutional deficiencies which have led to the formation of the sub-group. Institutional problems such as poor remuneration, absence of monitoring team, low disciplinary actions against brutal officers, inadequate re-orientation of police officers among others which makes it easier for police officers to form sub-cultures where brutality is a normal way of life.

## **2.4. Empirical Review**

Gopala(2012), conducted a study titled, "Better policing through a paradigm shift in public perception of the police" through an interview among thirty residents of Terengganu and thirty residents of Penang Malaysia. His study found out that the respondents believed that individual members of the police force do sometimes go over board and deal with suspects or citizens in an overly brutal manner resulting in injury, insult and in some occasion death.

Another study conducted by Okunola(2019), with the title, " Exploring the public perception of police on crime prevention and management in Lagos State", through an interview of residents of Oshodi/ Isolo and Ijoshatedo/Itire local government area, Lagos State, showed that factors contributing to how the general public view the police are shaped by the widespread of violent and corrupt practices among the officers of the Nigerian police force while on duty. Police officers laxity response to crime situations also influences the way they were perceived in the society.

Also, Taylor(2018), conducted a study with the title, "Students perception of police", using a sample questionnaire distributed to students of North Florida college of Arts and Sciences United States, found out positive perception of police brutality kills positive opinions about the police, which is necessary for a cohesive society. He found that positive perception of the police will create an environment where the police can better perform their job and duties, and the citizens feel safe.

Researches done by Paine and Gainey (2007), titled "perception of police brutality" through a qualitative data collection techniques obtained from national populace of America found that perception of police brutality is affected by prior contact, age, social class, gender, race or ethnicity, etc. Those who have personal contact with the police perceive the police as brutal than those who have no contact with the police. With regard to age, younger individuals have less favorable attitude or perception than older individuals (Dukes and

Hughes 2004). On social class, individuals from economically disadvantage neighborhood perceives the police as more brutal compared with those from economically advantage neighborhood, with regard to gender, women have a little favorable attitude towards the police compared to men. In terms of race or ethnicity, both blacks and Hispanics reported heightened perception of police brutality (Weitzer and Tuch 2004) and lower rates of satisfaction with the police than their white counterparts.

Another study conducted by Bamgbose (1997) with the title "Perception of the police by the poor in Oyo State through a questionnaire distributed among the residents of Oyo State found that many residents of Oyo State have a poor perception of the police as there was numerous records of police brutality in the state. Incidences of police brutality such as assault, unlawful detention, arbitrary arrest, etc was high in the Oyo State and has led the residents to cry out to the government of Oyo State and other political stakeholders.

Koch(2018), conducted a study on the instruments of police brutality titled, " Militarization of police through a survey on the residents of Ferguson, Charlotte and Southemp, United States and found out that the use of military weapons such as machine guns, bayonets, grenade launchers, aircrafts, etc by the police had a minimal or no deterrent impact on crime rather, increased higher levels of force or brutality against the citizens. This study also found that every 10 percent increase in the value of military equipment received by a county results in 5.9 fewer crimes per 100,000 residents. However, when looking at military-grade weapons specifically, the same study found that receipt of these weapons had minimal or no deterrent impact on crime. Multiple studies have confirmed concerns about the militarization of police, showing that it results in law enforcement using higher levels of force against citizens. Overall, police militarization statistics seem to suggest that utilizing certain types of military equipment may result in reduced crime within a community but increased use of force by police officers against community members. This same study also found that most Americans believe that police should be required to receive a warrant before conducting a search of homes and vehicles or monitoring phone calls. This erosion of public confidence in law enforcement and low support for militarization impedes law enforcement's ability to effectively secure public safety.

## **2.5 Study Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were developed to guide this this;

- 1. H1:** Male residents are more likely to perceive the police as being brutal than their female counterparts in Oyi LGA.

**H0:** Male residents are not likely to perceive the police as being brutal than their female counterparts in Oyi LGA.

2. **H1:** Christians are most likely to confront the police when any form of brutality is observed than their non-Christian counterparts in Oyi LGA.

**H0:** Christians are less likely to confront the police when any form of brutality is observed than their non-Christian counterparts in Oyi LGA.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Research Design**

This study adopted descriptive survey design. This form of design was considered appropriate because it entailed the collection of data using instruments such as questionnaire or interviews and allows for descriptive interpretation of results (Nwagbara, 2003). Again, descriptive survey design helps in gathering first-hand data from field and it is based on these that this study found it suitable to be employed in this study.

### **3.2 Area of the Study**

Oyi local government area is situated within Anambra state, South-east geopolitical zone of Nigeria with the headquarters of the LGA in the town of Nteje. The LGA is made up of several towns and villages such as Ogbunike, Umunya, Nteje, Nkwelle, and Awkuzu with an estimated population of 249,448. The area is mostly populated by Igbo ethnic group and Igbo language is commonly spoken in the area, while the predominant religion practiced in the area is Christianity. A number of colorful festivals are held in Oyi Local Government Area and these include the Ofala and Isigwu festivals while notable landmarks in the area include the popular Ogbunike Cave which is a UNESCO World heritage site.

### **3.3 Population of the Study**

The current estimated population of Oyi local government area is put at 249,448 inhabitants. However, the target population of this study is comprised of adult residents of Oyi aged 18 years and above. They are the farmers, traders, civil servants, artisans, students and other residents of the area. The choice of this category of persons is based on the fact that they are matured and through their everyday activities are most likely to encounter the police.

### **3.4. Sample Size Determination**

The sample size for this study is four hundred (400) residents of Oyi LGA in Anambra State. This was statistically determined using Taro Yamane formula and the calculation was carried out thus;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where;

n = Desired sample size

N = Population size under study

1 = Unity (always constant) in value

e = error margin (5% or 0.05)<sup>2</sup>

Thus;

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{249,448}{1 + 249,448(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{249,448}{1 + 249,448(0.0025)} \\ &= \frac{249,448}{624.62} \\ n &= 400. \end{aligned}$$

### 3.5 Sampling Technique

This study adopted multi-stage sampling technique which involved successive random sampling in selecting towns, villages, households and respondents. This technique is a combination of probability and non-probability sampling methods. The choice of multi-stage technique for this study is because the sample was large enough and it also enables ease of sampling. First, this study stratified Oyi LGA into her five major towns of Ogbunike, Umunya, Nteje, Nkwelle, and Awkuzu. Through the use of paper balloting, four towns were selected and they were Ogbunike, Umunya, Nteje and Awkuzu. This selection process was carried out through writing of names of the towns in a piece of papers and was shuffled in a cup, thereafter, three random selections were made to arrive at that three.

At the second stage, the selected four towns were clustered according to their villages and from each of the towns, two villages were randomly selected. The selection process was also done through paper balloting, and this gives a total of eight villages.

Thirdly, the selected villages were stratified according to households and from each of the village, ten households were selected. This gives a total of eighty households in Oyi LGA that were used for this study. These households were selected by representing them with a number in pieces of papers and every fifth household was picked.

To select study participants, the researcher randomly picked five adult members of the households. They were comprised of male and female residents and this is in view of ensuring gender balance. This therefore gives a total of four hundred (400) which represent the sample size. The eligibility of each household selected was based on the presence of adult male and female, which could be a father, mother, trader, artisan, civil servant, farmer or student. This entails having in the study at least one enlightened and informed adult.

### **3.6 Instrument for Data Collection**

The major instruments for data collection were questionnaire and in-depth interviews (IDI) guide. The instruments were prepared and given to two research experts (comprising of the researcher's supervisor and another lecturer) in the Department of Criminology and Security Studies, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu, University, Igbariam for face and content validation. The experts' comments and suggestions were effected by the researcher before embarking on field to gather data.

The questionnaire was divided sections. Section A is the letter of introduction; section B was on personal data of the respondents and Section C was on substantive issues of the study. The questionnaire was comprised of open and closed ended questions. The questionnaire has instructional messages to guide the respondents on how to answer the questions.

### **3.7 Administration of Instruments**

The instrument was administered by the researcher with the help of five research assistants. These research assistants helped in the distribution and retrieval of the instrument. The copies of the instrument that were properly filled and returned were used for analysis.

### **3.8 Method of Data Analysis**

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to process the generated data. The analytical tools used in analyzing the study objectives were frequency count, percentage, mean scores and Likert scale, which was set thus;

$$\frac{5+4+3+2+1}{5} = \frac{15}{5} = 3.0.$$

The study hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using chi-square inferential statistics. The chi-square ( $\chi^2$ ) formula was stated thus;

$$\chi^2 = \frac{\sum C \times ER}{N}$$

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Where:

$\sum C$  = Summation of columns

$\sum R$	=	Summation of rows
OF	=	Observation frequencies
EF	=	Expected frequencies
N	=	Total number of observation
$\Sigma$	=	Summation

**Decision Rule:**

1. Acceptance of the Likert scale result was based on any response item with a Mean score of 3.0 and above; while response items below that benchmark were rejected.
2. If the p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis would be rejected and if greater would be accepted.

**DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This study administered four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire and out of which, twenty-four (24) copies were not returned by the respondents; hence, three hundred and seventy-six (376) which represent 94% response rate were retrieved and used for analysis. The generated data were presented and analysed in this chapter, under the following sub-headings, demographic characteristics of respondents, analysis of research questions, test of hypotheses and discussion of findings.

**4.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, age, marital status, occupation, educational level and religious affiliation were presented and analysed here. The result is shown in Table 4.1;



Table 4.1: Analysis of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Mean (x)</b>
<b>Gender</b>			
Male	201	53.5	
Female	175	46.5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Age</b>			
18- 25	60	16.0	
26-33	38	10.1	
34-41	89	23.7	
42-59	143	38.0	42.4
60 and above	46	12.2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Educational Attainment</b>			
No formal education	33	8.8	
Primary	56	14.9	
Secondary	79	21.0	
Tertiary	198	52.7	
Others	10	2.6	
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Marital Status</b>			
Single	104	27.7	
Married	211	56.1	
Widowed	59	15.7	
Separated/Divorced	2	0.5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Occupation</b>			
Unemployed	21	5.6	
Student	48	12.8	
Farming	71	18.9	
Trading	103	27.4	
Civil Servant	66	17.6	
Retiree	58	15.4	
Others	9	2.3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>100%</b>	
<b>Religious Affiliation</b>			
Christianity	371	98.7	
Islam	2	0.5	
African Traditional Religion	3	0.8	
Atheist	-	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>100%</b>	

Source: field survey, 2023

Table 4.1 presents the analysis and result of the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. The table showed that majority 201(53.5%) of the respondents were males and their female counterparts constituted 175(46.5%). The average age of the respondents was 42 years, indicating that they were adults. It was also revealed that majority 198(52.7%) of the respondents had tertiary education and the least 10(2.6%) had other forms of education. Again, about 211(56.1%) of the respondents which constituted the majority were married and the least of them 2(0.5%) were either separated or divorced. In terms of occupation, the findings revealed that the highest respondents 103(27.4%) were into trading and this was followed by 71(18.9%) that were into farming, and the least 9(2.3%) that were into other forms of economic vocations. Lastly, the table showed that majority of the respondents 371(98.7%) were Christians, while just small fractions 3(0.08%) and 2(0.05%) were Muslims and traditionalists respectively.

#### 4.2 Test of Hypotheses

The formulated study hypotheses were tested here. The results are shown below;

##### Test of Hypothesis One

**H1:** Male residents are more likely to perceive the police as being brutal than their female counterparts in Oyi LGA.

**H0:** Male residents are not likely to perceive the police as being brutal than their female counterparts in Oyi LGA.

Questionnaire items 1 and 7 formed the basis for testing this hypothesis by cross- tabulation. To do this, questionnaire item 7 responses were re-coded from 'Yes; No' and Can't Say' into 'Yes and No'. The result of the test is shown in Table 4.6:

Table 4.2: Result of hypothesis one

Gender		Do you think that the police are brutal in Oyi L.G.A?			Chi-Square
		Yes	No	Total	
Male	Count/% within	194(86.6%)	7(4.6%)	201(53.5%)	X <sup>2</sup> = 37.819 <sup>a</sup>
Female	Count/% within	30(13.4%)	145(95.4%)	175(46.5%)	
Total	Count/% within	224(100.0%)	152(100.0%)	376(100.0%)	
					N = 376
					df = 1
					P=.000, <0.05 Sig.

Source: field survey, 2023

Table 4.2 shows the test and result of hypothesis one. Based on the table it can be deduced that the computed chi-square is 37.819, with a p-value of .000. Since the p-value was found to be less than the 0.05 level of significance, there appears an ample evidence to reject the null hypothesis and accept the substantive. This implies that male residents are more likely to perceive the police as being brutal than their female counterparts in Oyi LGA.

#### 4.3.2 Test of Hypothesis Two

**H1:** Christians are most likely to confront the police when any form of brutality is observed than their non-Christian counterparts in Oyi LGA.

**H0:** Christians are less likely to confront the police when any form of brutality is observed than their non-Christian counterparts in Oyi LGA.

Questionnaire items 6 and 13 formed the basis for testing this hypothesis by cross-tabulation. To do this, questionnaire item 6 responses were re-coded from 'Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion' into 'Christians and Non-Christians', while item 13 responses were re-coded from 'Yes, Not at all and Can't Say' into 'Yes and No'. The result of the test is presented in Table 4.2:

Table 4.2: Result of hypothesis two

Religious Affiliation	Are you likely to confront or challenge the police when they brutalize you or anyone known to you?	Chi-Square		
		Yes	No	Total
Christians	Count/% within	79(95.2%)	292(99.7%)	371(98.7%)
Non-Christians	Count/% within	4(4.8%)	1(0.3%)	5(1.3%)
Total	Count/% within	83(100.0%)	293(100.0%)	376(100.0%)
X <sup>2</sup> = 19.253 <sup>a</sup>				
N = 376				
df = 1				
p=.013, >0.05 Sig.				

Source: field survey, 2023.

Table 4.2 shows the test and result of hypothesis two. Evidence from the table indicates that the computed chi-square is 19.235, with a p-value of .013. This suggests that the p-value was greater than the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, there was convincing evidence to uphold the null hypothesis and reject the substantive. This implies that Christians are less

likely to confront the police when any form of brutality is observed than their non-Christian counterparts in Oyi LGA.

#### **4.4 Discussion of Findings**

The result of the socio-demographic characteristics showed that there were more of male respondents than the females. This is suggestive of the position of the men to talk about issues of concerning in the society and especially as it pertains to police brutality. In the traditional Igbo society, men are the head and mouthpiece of the family and exercise his protective roles over his family. The average age of the respondents showed to be 42 years, indicating that they were adults and matured to have understanding of the topic of discourse. The finding that majority of the respondents had tertiary education suggest that they were enlightened and had the capacity to read and understand the study questionnaire. The majority of the respondents were married people and suggestive of the fact that they had responsibilities and family members to carter for. Trading as the prevailing occupation of the people did not emanate as a surprise giving the fact that the study was conducted in Anambra State. Anambra is the commercial hub of Nigeria and Anambrarians are more inclined to business than any other work. As a result, even among those into white-collar jobs they still run small-scale businesses to augment their monthly salary. It was not surprising having close to 100% of the respondents as Christians, due to the fact that Anambra State and Oyi in particular are Christians dominated areas.

The result of objective one on how police brutality is perceived by residents indicated that there was prevalence of police brutality in the Oyi. Consequently, residents perceived the Nigerian Police in a bad light due to prevailing acts of brutality in their domain and as a result the people are showing unhealthy disposition towards the force. The implication is that this could mare government efforts towards public safety and the desired gains of the much anticipated community policing. Anambra State is presently experiencing unknown gunmen attacks on security facilities and this has brought about intense fear among residents of the State. Therefore, engaging in acts of brutality against unarmed or defenseless civilians could worsen the precarious situation in the Sate. This aligns with report of WISPI (2017) that the Nigerian police force is one of the most brutal police forces in the world.

Moreso, result of objective two on prevailing forms of police brutality in Oyi LGA showed that there were ruthless torturing of suspects, intimidation and beating of youths, unlawful harassment and detention of residents by the police. This is in tandem with the findings of Global Team (2020) that Nigerian police often use force beyond the limit that is permissible by law, infringing on the rights of innocent civilians and causing a lot of harm and pain to citizens. It is pertinent to state here that the Nigerian constitution presumes a crime suspect is innocent until proven guilty in the law court. Therefore, beating, torture or inhuman treatment of any sort by law enforcement agents in order to force suspects to accept crimes they knew nothing about is not just brutality but violation of fundamental human right on faire hearing. It was also revealed that the police unlawfully harass and detain residents. The

implication is that the people might be pushed to the wall to a point of reprisal attacks against the force. An accumulation of anger is like a time bomb that would someday explode.

The findings of objective three pointed that residents of Oyi reacted to police brutality through protest/complaint against the act. This is understandable bearing in mind the wave of END-SARS protest that moved round the country last year (2020) and with Awkuzu in Oyi LGA receiving the heat of it due to the disbanded SARS headquarter in the area. It is in no doubt that the good people of Oyi used the medium to sue against police brutality. In addition, it was revealed that acts of police brutality had made the people to be unfriendly towards them. This is very dangerous because it can be of risk to the policeman on the road and can even frustrate efforts towards community policing. As a result of that, there was non-corporation with the police in crime dictation and prevention. This is the danger of being hostile to a people that are meant to be protected. More interestingly, the idea of leaving acts of provocations for God to judge received positive response as another way the people react to police brutality. This is not surprising considering the fact that majority of the respondents were Christians and the Biblical injunction that says when slapped at one cheek, you should turn the other for the person to also slap could have shaped the lives of the people. They therefore could have seen it as unchristian to retaliate or perhaps it was as a result of fear of the gun in the hands of the policemen. Whichever, findings showed that the residents had through protest/complaint, unfriendly disposition, non-corporation with the police in the fight against crime and submission to God reacted towards police provocations and brutality.

However, result of objective four showed that suggested measures by the respondents on how to curb police brutality in Oyi in particular and Nigeria in general were comprised of periodic retraining of the police to international best practices, especially on civil relation. Also, others sued for the sack of any police officer convicted of brutality to serve as deterrence to others. While such extreme measure might be applied in certain professions, we do not subscribe to this view in respect to security officers. This is because dismissing security personnel with the training and awareness on how to source for arms could pose a serious security threat to the society and thereby worsen the fragile security situation in the country. Moreso, there was a view on routine monitoring of police activities. This is in order because leaving them without thorough check could avail them the privilege to continue to engage in corrupt practices and unwholesome provocative acts against the public. Community policing as the panacea to create healthy police-public relationship and disciplinary actions against acts of police brutality by the Police Service Commission (PSC) were also advocated as means of minimizing the scourge.

Lastly, result of hypothesis one revealed that male residents are more likely to perceive the police as being brutal than their female counterparts in Oyi LGA. The result of hypothesis two showed that Christians are less likely to confront the police when any form of brutality is observed than their non-Christian counterparts in Oyi LGA. This is not unconnected with the biblical teachings that commanded Christian faithful to leave vengeance for God.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The illegal activities of the police in Oyi LGA need urgent government and other stakeholders' attention to address. That has led to the perception of the police in bad light and this act of few bad eggs in the force could endanger the lives of other good police personnel out there. This is in view of the fact that there are good police officers in Nigeria and Anambra State in particular. An outstanding officer of repute was C.S.P. Rabi Garba, who was the Divisional Police Officer (DPO) in-charge of Fegge Police Station in Onitsha, Anambra State that received wide commendation during the End-SARS protest. He is popularly known as Nigeria Anti-corruption Police Officer due to his ability to decline anything that has to do with art of corruption or bribery. The act of violation of fundamental human right to fair hearing among the police could pose a serious threat to the well meaning officers, especially when left unchecked. It may not only trigger another wave of avoidable protest similar to that of End-SARS, but could create a state anarchy in the system.

This study therefore concludes that the police in Oyi LGA are still indulging in acts of brutality against residents and that this may not only continue unabated, but could mar government efforts in trying to restore security in the country.

### **5.2 Recommendations**

Based on the findings, this study recommends that;

1. The Nigerian Inspector General of Police (IGP) should set up a disciplined taskforce that should embark on police monitoring across the nation and ensure that their reports are implemented. This is in view of the fact that this would make many of men of the force to be up and doing, bearing in mind that extra eyes are somewhere watching his dealings.
2. The National Assembly should enact a law mandating the government to provide suspects of crime with legal representation, especially to those who cannot afford it. This is in view of the unconstitutional detention of Nigerians by the police without trial within 48 hours. The danger is that it raises tension or grudge against security personnel.
3. The long anticipated community policing should be implemented in practical terms and community leaders should be engaged as stakeholders. This will help sort grievances against the police and make the people feel responsible for their own safety. This will not only eliminate the unhealthy relationship between the police and their host communities, but with the sense of responsibility imposed on the people, they can easily fish out hoodlums in their midst.
4. There should be a new domestic or Nigerian police ideology different from what was inherited from colonial masters of "we against them". After independence, the Nigerian State inherited the colonial police and no serious effort was made to dissolve that police and reconstitute the kind of policing Nigerians want. That long perception of unfriendliness, brutish and inhumane that were characterized of colonial police relation with the natives, have been sustained till date.



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