

**Use of Reform to Motivate the  
Nigeria Police Force  
towards Greater Efficiency and Effectiveness:  
A Deposition**

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**O. Jason Osai**

Institute of Foundation Studies (IFS)  
Rivers State University of Science & Technology  
PMB 5080, Port Harcourt, NIGERIA  
Email: [jasonosai1@yahoo.com](mailto:jasonosai1@yahoo.com)

# Use of Reform to Motivate the Nigeria Police Force towards Greater Efficiency and Effectiveness: A Deposition

## Abstract

Why does a Nigerian who is considered of average intelligence with a performance capacity and resultant output that are below average travel to another country and excel in the performance of his duties beyond expectations, be it in school or at work? Inspired by this phenomenon, which is relevant to Nigerians in all works of life, the paper investigates this empirical trend from the perspective of the optimal functionality of organizations with special reference to equipment, motivation, job security and regularity of reviews of the organizational processes and procedures through reforms in the Nigeria Police Force. The paper further investigates the extent to which the organizational environment spurs the individual Police officer to perform his/her duties optimally and concludes that it requires a learning organization whose processes and procedures are reviewed periodically, the officers retrained and appropriately equipped through the instrumentality of reforms to effectively and efficiently play the very crucial roles of guaranteeing the requisite safe and secure social environment for sustainable economic development; this setting, the paper opines, is *sine qua non* for fostering effective service delivery and the consolidation of the fundamental ideals of democracy towards a virile economy and stable society in Nigeria.

## Introduction

From Abraham Maslow's classic on basic human needs, we note that close in importance to the basic human needs for food, shelter and companionship comes security. (Maslow, 1969)

In this particular instance, security refers to the need to create an orderly world governed by dependable laws and rules of human relationship and to develop a reassuring structure that guarantees a departure from the Hobessian "*state of nature*" that, we are told, was "*short, brutish and nasty*." (Hobbes, 1994) Globally, the degree to which this objective of "*an orderly world governed by dependable rules and the reassuring structure that guarantees a departure from the Hobessian state of nature*" is achieved differs from one country to another and the various stages on the scale of their efficiency is a function of diverse factors that include the historical development and the general stage of their technological advancement. While security challenges are similar in most societies, in the mean, the fact remains that the challenges of

security of any given society are reflective of numerous factors that are, generally, peculiar to that society. Simply put, security challenges reflect the stage of development of a society; therefore, what obtains in the developed economies that are, expectedly, more advanced and efficient, differs considerably from what obtains in developing economies such as Nigeria.

Irrespective of the clime and state of development of a nation, the truth remains that the Policeman is the foot-soldier of this concept of “*departure from the Hobessian state of nature;*” he is the most frequent officer in what Charles Goodsell refers to as Public Encounter, which is the point where the whole system and instrument of government comes in one-on-one contact with the citizens. (Goodsell, 1981) The Policeman is the one that faces the day-to-day realities of ensuring an orderly society; matter-of-factly, it is my considered opinion that regarding the daily performance of duties, the Policeman is the highest risk officer in the society. This assertion is relevant to every human society worldwide and is especially so given the acute security realities and challenges in developing societies.

Prior to the incidents of disintegrative nationalism across the country and the resultant volatility of various regions, Nigerians took security for granted; it was such that security was rarely referred to in seminars and conferences. Security is an elastic term that may be stretched to mean, on the level of the individual, the absence of threat to life and want or deprivation of the necessities of life. At the level of society or an organization, security refers to the absence of threat to its survival, cohesion and development. At the level of a nation-state, security is the absence of threat to the survival of the core interests, territorial sovereignty or integrity and development of a country; this aspect of security pertains to the importance of armed or military forces in the defense of the population and

the nation from insecurity, conceived principally in terms of violence and unlawful appropriation of property.

As agents of government especially created for the maintenance of public order through the prevention and control of crime, investigation and detection of crime and criminals and the prosecution of offenders, the Police, as stated earlier, come in one-on-one contact with the citizen more than any other institution of state security. Meanwhile, the Police remain the least understood profession by a generality of the populace. In crime prevention and detection, the Police are looked at as magicians who can fight crime even without necessary logistics, and as people who possess extraordinary ability to detect crime in the absence of information. Their performance is weighted with misconception and ignorance, resulting in an out-of-context assessment of their actions and inactions. In human society where saints are very scarce, the critics of the Police abound. The Police is hated and avoided by men whose interest and life style are dubious and often misunderstood by the general public. Resultantly, there is communication gap, which, naturally, degenerates into mutual suspicion, conflict and lack of cooperation from those for whose protection the Police put their life at risk. Negative misconceptions of the Police such as these may be a product of a combination of factors that include (1) ignorance of the inner working system of the Police and (2) the social, economic and political environment, which varies from one society to another and from one police jurisdiction to another.

From the title of the paper, we note that there are four words that are fundamental to the essence of the paper and these are: *Reform*, *Motivate*, *Efficiency* and *Effectiveness*. Beyond these words, there are two elements that are essential and relevant to this discourse; these are

the institution and the individual. Therefore, we shall approach this quest from two perspectives: (1) definition and discussion of these key words emphasizing their relevance and place in the objective of the paper, and (2) the optimal functionality of the Nigeria Police Force (organizational perspective) and the attitudinal disposition and behavioral patterns of the individual Police Officer in his interaction with his colleagues within the organization and with the public (individual/behavioral perspective).

### **Reform**

As a word, “reform” is synonymous with improvement, reorganization, modification, restructuring, alteration, change, transformation and development. The intent of reform is, therefore, to take a person, a thing, an entity or an organization from one state of functionality to a higher state towards perfection; it means seeking ways and means of achieving optimal performance of the entity. Thus, the basic utility of reform, with special reference to what we are gathered here for, is to fashion effectual ways and means of ensuring that the Police perform their function of securing life and property in Nigeria with greater professionalism so that Nigerians can sleep with two eyes closed.

### **Motivation**

The word motivate, from which motivation is derived, has the following synonyms: inspire, stimulate, impel, urge, prompt, spur, encourage, egg on, induce, cause and trigger off. We note that the action implied in these words is targeted at the psychology of the individual in the process of performing his duties, which, in this case, is the function of Policing. Tones of literature have been written by numerous organizational behaviorists conceptualizing, analyzing and elaborating on what constitutes motivation and the shire essence of its

situationality. For our purposes, we shall settle for the basic meaning of motivation as indicated from the synonyms stated here.

### **Efficiency and Effectiveness: A Note**

Webster's presents the words competence, good organization and effectiveness as synonyms of efficiency; it also offers efficiency, efficacy, usefulness, helpfulness, value and success as synonyms of effectiveness. In other words, for Webster's efficiency and effectiveness are synonymous. So, we ask: why the duplication or tautology? Is it tautology for emphasis, which is sometimes accepted? Is there something in between in the meanings of the words? The two words work in tandem towards improving both individual and organizational functionality; the collective effectiveness of individuals in the discharge of their duties translates to organizational efficiency.

### **Towards Optimal Functionality of the System: Organizational and Individual Perspectives**

In this segment, we shall discuss the organizational (institutional) and individual (behavioral) elements that interact in an intricate web to produce effective and efficient service delivery. Note that while the former of structural and systemic, the latter deal with affective the persona of the individual and is, therefore, psychological.

#### **Organization (Institutional) Perspective**

The organization functions pretty much like an organism; the efficient and effective functionality of the various parts positively affect the functionality of the organization. Drawing analogy from the human body, we note that if the little finger of an individual's hand is affected by whitlow, the whole system of the person's human mechanism is in

distress and, therefore, virtually malfunctions; the person is, sometimes, incapable of performing simple mental function of thought.

In the following pages, we shall review issues that could lead to the optimization of the functions of the Police from the institutional/organizational perspective; the following are the issues:

- Collective and collaborative approach to solving problems
- Creating a learning organization
- Invest in planning
- Restore trust
- Fund the system; especially what works, and
- Institutionalize change.
- Equipment

### ***Collective and Collaborative Approach to Solving Problems***

No individual, group, unit or department can ever have all the answers. Creative, collective and collaborative problem-solving is the key to organizational effectiveness. This is especially so for the Police whose constituency covers every nook and cranny of the country. Unlike other organizations whose constituency comprises one or a few communities, the community of the Police is every community in the society hence there is a State Command in every State capital, an Area Command covering a group of local governments, a Division in every Local Government and a Station in every community cluster across the country.

### ***Creating a Learning Organization***

The concept of a learning organization offers an appealing new way to think about changing the culture within an organization so that it evolves a resilient craving for finding ways and means of implementing new ideas. Peter Senge of Massachusetts Institute of Technology

offers that a learning organization is a place where people confront learning opportunities with “wonder rather than fear.” Among the questions that Senge poses about existing organizations are, “Why do we derive our self-esteem from knowing as opposed to learning? Why do we create controlling bureaucracies when we attempt to form visionary enterprises? And why do we persist in fragmentation and piecemeal analysis as the world becomes more and more interconnected?”

To make the most of existing reforms and to light the path toward building an efficient and effective Police force, the system must transform itself into a learning organization that embraces Senge’s “culture of commitment” to constant learning and experimentation. Senge, an ardent advocate of systems thinking, proposes the learning organization model as a vehicle that can help people make the day-to-day changes that bring the organization closer to achieving the new vision. A reform is all about a new vision that stipulates new ways (may be processes and procedures) of doing the same old thing and new thinking and attitudinal disposition of the functionaries; resultantly, all and sundry must adjust to and keep pace with the day-to-day changes required to move the organization to a higher level of service delivery to the society.

In today’s fast-paced world, any agency that fails to grow and change risks being left behind. At the same time, the police may well have the greatest reason to lead the way since it is the first agency to have contact with citizens. This, of course, has enormous implications for the society. If we can transform the Police Force into a learning organization, it can emerge as a model for other elements within the Nigerian system to follow.



Furthering on creating a learning organization, as with any new concept, it is important to strip away the chaff to find the kernel inside; Kline and Saunders provide a practical outline as they offer that creating a “culture of positive thinking” within Police means fostering an atmosphere where people celebrate success instead of glorying in other people’s failures. Kline and Saunders opine that there are three requirements for a learning organization; and these are: structure, nurturing and problem solving. To these and the essential factor of effective communication we shall now turn:

### ***Structure***

Leadership within the system must put in place the pathways for open communication, as well as the opportunities for people to work together collaboratively. This means that relationship amongst departments must be collaborative and not competitive. Learning team or learning library that searches out good ideas from elsewhere and makes them available to all must, therefore, be created. The structure can and should look different in different places, but the challenge is to make the transition from the traditional command-and-control model to the open model of the learning organization.

### ***Nurturing***

The role of the superior officer is no longer to control, demand, criticize, and critique, but to facilitate, coach, and support. Long-term and sustainable goal is excellent performance that is both self-correcting and self-generating. Officers must reward open communication and risk-taking; the concept of “assumption of competence” is recommended so that the officer’s job is no longer to crack the whip, but to allow people to blossom; this translates to

a recruitment system that focuses on attracting, retaining and, regularly, retraining people who are self-directed.

### ***Problem Solving***

Every individual in the organization must wear their “problem-solving hat(s) all the time” – “make the workplace safe for thinking.” Elements within the systems simply cannot afford to hire people who just want to follow orders without the input of some element of discretion within allowance frame of the essence of the command structure. Formal and informal rewards must support people who understand the job; this engendersthe problem-solving capacity of the organization andleads to positive change. Another key concept is that when efforts succeed, that success is shared therefore engendering the spirit of collectivism.

### ***Effective Communication***

Effective communication is a fundamental element in human relations and organizational psychology. Therefore, learning organizations view effective communication with utmost seriousness. Unfortunately, in most organizations, meetings are often places where many people speak, but few listen – most are too busy preparing what they plan to say when they get the chance. The role of the chair in this model is to play communication traffic cop.

A healthy alternative to this competitive communication model is the restorative justice strategy of “circles.” By placing chairs in a circle, everyone is equal and they must look at each other. Ground rules emphasize that it is as important to listen as to speak and people are assured that they will have a chance to be heard. Becoming a learning organization requires committed leadership willing to model desired changes and drive fear out of the organization. Again, learning organizations cultivateand encourage team learning.

The goal is not to have one person or a handful of people with all the critical information, but to share knowledge broadly. Of important note is the unfortunate fact that the instructional value of experiential “anecdotes” is all too often dismissed as “war stories” in criminal justice circles. Anecdotes assist in making abstract concepts concrete and enhance credibility by showing how things work in the real world.

To keep pace with an ever-changing world, the Police must transform itself into a learning organization, with open communication, support for risk-taking, and systems thinking that reminds people of the vision they are trying to achieve. The challenge includes changing the culture within departments from an expert, command-and-control model to participatory administration where officers act as coaches who nurture a climate that promotes innovation.

### **Invest in Planning**

Long-term strategic planning allows agencies and organizations to focus on a shared vision and build flexible strategies to achieve them, with an assessment process woven throughout so that corrections can be made along the way and so that efficiency and effectiveness can be measured. Structured time and opportunity for interaction and open communication are germane to achieving this.

### **The Utility of Trust**

Trust is an essential element of collaboration and promoting interpersonal relationships within organizations and creating a climate whereby people feel safe in the hands of the Police. Trust is essential for the health of the organization and for the function of policing with special reference to public perception of the Police. Here, the degree of professionalism

displayed by each and every individual Police officer in the discharge of his/her duty impacts positively or negatively on the citizens' and public perception of the Force.

### **Funding of Programs**

There is a growing body of empirical studies that identify programs and practices that work and those findings should drive funding decisions. There is the need to do a better job of educating people inside and outside the system on why investing in evidence-based, data-driven initiatives that are outcome-focused is fundamental for the efficient and effective delivery in the function of policing. The other side of the same coin is to depart from perpetuating efforts that are ineffective or downright harmful to the system; this way, available scarce resources can be re-positioned and utilized for initiatives that have the proven capacity of making a positive difference.

### **Institutionalizing Change**

Why has it been so difficult for good ideas to succeed? The truth is that organizational change is always difficult, sometimes even more so within the public sector. The most successful businesses recognize the importance of addressing the culture within their companies, to ensure that new ideas can take root and grow. The best corporations know that you have to prepare the seedbed, plow in the proper fertilizer, and then keep watering, weeding, and tending the vulnerable new shoots until they can stand on their own. Conversely, in policing in Nigeria, such opportunities and training sessions on how to foster and sustain organizational change are staggered, at best.

Private sector businesses often enjoy greater flexibility in setting work rules than their public sector counterparts. It is also easier to measure success in business, since the yardstick

is just about money – did sales increase or did the stock price go up? In contrast, we may ask: are increasing arrests an indicator of success or failure? How do we measure safety? The outcome of the persistence of such situation is inertia; meanwhile, surmounting inertia is a daunting task that has proven to be resilient and, therefore, rarely yields much success. Overcoming a sustained and ferocious backlash is even more daunting and reforms, if properly conceptualized, articulated and implemented, can generate ferocious resistance within and without the system. Even in places where change has come, opponents look for openings to go back to business as usual. Critics of reform often pounce on such instances to argue that these new ideas are just the latest in a long list of “flavors-of-the-month” that will eventually disappear, if the naysayers just wait long enough.

### **Equipment: *Sine qua non* to Effectiveness and Efficiency**

Commenting on the state of equipment of the Nigeria Police Force, former Chief Justice of Nigeria S.M.A. Belgore observes that:

The forensic laboratory [of the Nigeria Police Force] at Oshodi in Lagos and handwriting and fingerprint facilities at Enugu, Ibadan and Kaduna, which had been existing since colonial days, have not been duplicated in the new states and their facilities are out-of-touch with modern trends. The technological, chemical, medical and electronic revolutions of the past forty years have no place in what we have on ground in Nigeria. The Police Force has grown very large in manpower without concurrent expansion of equipment and infrastructure. (Alemika et al, 2010:viii)

The point remains that one of the fundamental elements of achieving any goal is ensuring that the process is properly and adequately equipped. Take the instance of man landing on the moon: no matter the depth of knowledge possessed by Neil Armstrong and his colleagues of the Apollo 11 crew if they were handed the best-rated aircraft in the aviation industry, the historic landing on the moon in 1969 would not have been a reality. Being

appropriately equipped is, therefore, of absolute importance if the Police are expected to perform their functions effectively and efficiently.

### **Individual (Psychological/Behavioral) Perspective**

The *Cadaver-as-Mirror Theory* of organizational behavior holds that the treatment meted to an individual in an organizational situation impresses on every other member of the organization of what to expect. While this concept is relevant to the positive as well as negative situation, the general essence of the *cadaver-as-mirror theory* derives from the aphorism, which holds that the cadaver says “*as you are looking at me today, it is yourself that you are looking at, tomorrow.*” The theory is, therefore, more application in the negative sense. Is there a sanction and mobility system that is objective and adopts Max Weber’s concept of *formalistic impersonality* (Weber, 1922) or is the process dependent on the whims and caprices of authority figures? What happens to the family of a Policeman in the unfortunate case that he dies in active service? Is his family thrown out of the barracks the next day? Is his entitlement paid as and when due or is his family subjected to the harrowing experience of “*come today, come tomorrow*” by his office and colleagues?

The above affect the psyche of the Policeman and, naturally, reflects on the efficiency, effectiveness hence professionalism he displays in the performance of his duties with special reference to the conduct in the interface with individuals and the community. It is at this point of contact with the community that the efficiency, effectiveness and professionalism of the Police Force is gauged and it is here that the image of the Force in the minds of the people is affected, either way.

## **Analysis**

The fundamental question of how the Nigerian society will deal with critical issues of crime and violence within a democratic framework, which values justice, is hinged on the effectiveness and efficiency of the Nigeria Police in the discharge of its duties. The Nigeria Police is personified by the average Policeman on the street and the psychology and attitudinal disposition of the Policeman is a reflection of the institutional and organizational nuances of the Nigeria Police Force. The degree to which the administrative and organizational mechanics of the institution of the Nigeria Police Force functions optimally reflects on the attitudinal disposition and behavior of the Policeman on the streets of law enforcement; in other words, an efficient Police Force will produce an effective Policeman.

Unlike other societies, especially the countries of the developed West, where there is concern about increasing pressures to scale back, to lower expectations, to re-focus on achieving narrow, targeted goals rather than to invest in reaching the conceptual next level, recent upsurge in youth activism and disintegrative nationalism resulting in widespread volatility of the Nigerian society. The reality is that if we do not go forward, we will inevitably end up going backward and, as a classical aphorism of policing goes: “until we are all safe, no one is truly safe.”

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is opined here that the responsibility of conceptualizing, articulating and implementing reforms with the attendant provision of the equipment necessary for the actualization of the aims and objectives of the reforms lies squarely on the shoulders of the leadership; under reference is the Police Service Commission and the top-brass of the

Nigeria Police Force; beyond this, the duty of ensuring that the essence of the reform is achieved is a collective, all-hands-on-deck and inclusive responsibility, which requires the commitment of all officers and men from the Inspector General of Police through the hierarchy of the system to the constable in the station and on the patrol and checkpoints.

Here, it is inevitable to touch base with the concept of leadership as it is the glue that holds an organization together and ensures that it does not lose focus and, therefore, derail from the organizational objectives. (Daft, 1999) My take on leadership is that an indisputable truth about it, be it in government, the organized private sector or socio-cultural setting, is that the relevant laws and tradition charge an office with certain powers and the enfranchised put an individual in charge; what distinguishes one officer from another is the capacity to take charge; and that is the kernel of leadership. It is emphasized here that “taking charge” presupposes patriotic followership that is willing to follow the leader in the pursuit of programs aimed at the objectives of the system, the organization, the community or the nation. It must be stressed that without this collective commitment, the realization of the organizational goals ends up a very tall order that is difficult if not impossible to achieve.

Assuming collective commitment to the realization of the organizational objectives, the leadership must:

- Support and exhibit the attributes of leadership at all levels in implementing, institutionalizing, and maintaining the momentum of effective and efficient policing,
- Encourage superior officers to serve as facilitators who access resources from inside and outside the department in problem solving,



- Egg on superior officers to act as models for the behavior that they want others to follow; and this should include demonstrating sensitivity to diversity
- Compel superior officers to assume and play the role of coaches who inspire and instruct and therefore act as mentors who guide and support,
- Ensure that the internal administrative and management style exhibit a striving for collaboration and consensus, and
- Guarantee the institutionalization of a sanction system that is impersonal and formalistic and demonstrate conspicuous evenhandedness in disciplinary matters and mobility in the system.

Given these, Nigeria Police Force will effectively harness the human and material resources available to it towards providing security for Nigerians and fostering a democratic culture that conduces to economic stability and sustainable national development.

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Thank you for listening, thank you very much.

**O. Jason Osai**

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