

## Do the Nigerian public trust their police?

### Summary

Police are important officials of the state charged with the responsibilities of preventing crime, apprehending offenders, and preserving public order. There are commonly held perceptions that incidences of violent political, personal and property crimes are on the increase in Nigeria, and that the police response has been ineffective and unsatisfactory. In a recent study, we investigated public confidence in the Nigerian police and satisfaction with their service.



Image courtesy of Sarah Yahn Chan (Flickr)

Respondents considered homelessness to be one of the most negative effects of conflicts

### Key findings

- Nearly one-half (48.5%) of the respondents felt somewhat or very unsafe in meeting the police
- Only 6.3% of the respondents felt that the police were effective most of the time in preventing or containing violent conflicts
- Only 6.4% of those interviewed expressed a lot of trust in the police; an additional 16.7% said they somewhat trust the police.

### Policy conclusions

Our research reveals a general lack of confidence in the capacity of the police to prevent and contain insecurity in Nigeria. Citizens lack trust in the police and there is a need to strengthen policy to enhance the capability of the police force for effective service delivery, and to enhance public confidence in the law enforcement agency.

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## Policy context

Violent conflicts and crimes are major problems in Nigeria. They have engendered widespread fear of insecurity across the country. Police are vital to the maintenance of public security, which is essential to political stability and economic development. However, public confidence in the Nigerian police is low.

## Overview

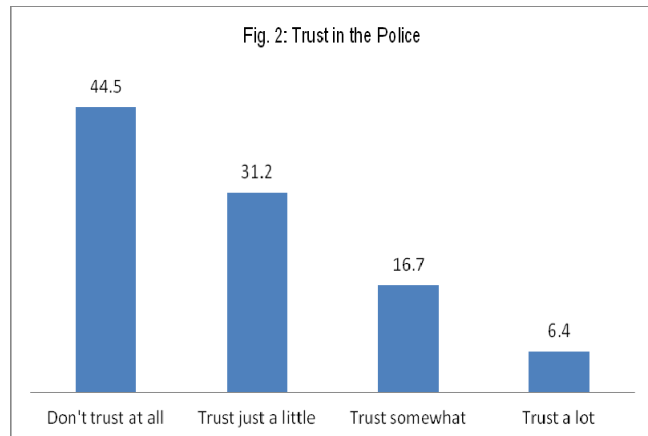
Researchers from the University of Jos, Nigeria and the iiG at the CSAE, University of Oxford, UK, investigated public opinion on economic, political and social issues in eleven cities across five of the six geo-political zones in the country. The cities were Enugu, Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Lafia, Ibadan, Jos, Bauchi, Sokoto, Onitsha and Aba. All with the exception of Onitsha are state capitals. A total of 2,750 respondents over 18 years of age were selected through multi-stage sampling and interviewed in their households in a language of their choice.

## Project findings

One-quarter of the respondents in the sample said that they or a member or members of their household had been victim of a crime in the past two years. A fifth (20.3%) of the respondents said armed robbery was the most common crime and disorder problem in their communities. A further 18.8% identified burglary as the major crime problem in the neighbourhood. Respondents were asked about the most negative effects of conflicts in their cities. Their responses indicated that the most negative effects were homelessness (internal displacement); loss of jobs and decrease in employment opportunities; destruction of schools

and educational facilities; increase in crime; and an increase in the price of food.

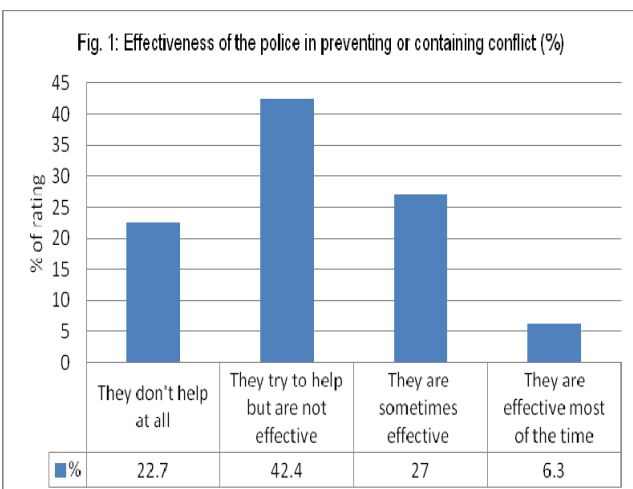
The respondents generally perceived the police as ineffective in preventing and containing violent conflicts (Fig. 1). Only about a third of the sample thought that the police were sometimes or most often effective.



Less than a quarter of the respondents displayed trust in the police. More than two-fifths had no trust in the police at all (Fig 2). The findings clearly point to the need to develop the capability and trustworthiness of the Nigerian police so that the law enforcement agency can serve as an effective public agency for the preservation of safety and order in the country.

## For more detailed information

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