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**POLICE ACT, REGULATIONS AND FEMALE
ASSIGNMENT TO
DUTIES IN THE NIGERIA POLICE FORCE (NPF)**

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ABSTRACT

There was a gender-based public perception of job assignment in the Nigeria Police Force. Thus this study looked at the practical duties performed by the policewomen vis-à-vis the stated duties in the Police Act and Regulations. The study was a survey, descriptive, using triangulation method (quantitative and qualitative) and guided by liberal feminism. 385 female respondents were sampled via Z test formula. Lottery method of simple random technique was used to select respondents without replacement from Zone 7 (Abuja, Kaduna and Niger states) of the NPF. Key informant and in-depth interviews (qualitative) were conducted with officers between the ranks of ASP and DIG. The quantitative data were analysed via SPSS and qualitative data through content analysis. The study reveals that

there is no gender specification of duties in the NPF; female officers are not limited to any duty; irrespective of the gender, only ranks and ability of officers are considered for job assignment. Hence, the study recommended that Police Act and Regulations should be reviewed to capture all the duties performed by policewomen. To also strengthen equity in the NPF, emphasis should continue to be on individual's ability and capacity for job assignment.

Keywords: Nigeria Police Force, Police Act and Regulations, Job assignment, Female Police officer, Gender

INTRODUCTION

The effect of the historic patriarchy in the gender-based definition of roles and assignment to duties to officials in virtually all organizations has attracted a new set of investigation. By contemporary definition, patriarchy refers to the systems and structures that accommodate the power of masculinity over feminism (Walby, 1990). In its present form, patriarchy acknowledges women as a class and refers to a system where men are privileged and women not suggesting that inequality is legitimately professed (Ali, 2013). Thus, patriarchy is not new and it refers to only one kind of male superiority (Wilson, 1995). Although, Lockwood (1986) contends that the idea of patriarchy is not applicable to modern societies since it refers to a specific historical form of domestic relationships, but the effect is still perceived by the general populace. Public perceptions, specifically the females', mutter and frown at the supremacy of males and feminists, had before now, been clamoring for gender equality at workplace and in traditionally defined sex roles.

By extension, the police institutions have failed to escape the glimpse of the public in assessing the patriarchal description of roles and assignment to duties in organizations. The perceptions of the public revealed that the patriarchal definition of roles dominating the culture of the police force has led to its gender-based interpretations

of the police duties and operations. This definition had hitherto generated the perception that women are too weak for the demands and expectations of policing. According to Idowu (2016), the Police Force is generally perceived as a male organisation as it is evident in the Nigeria Police Force via the recruitment requirements and the duties assigned to women after enlistment. Policewomen are seen as incapable of handling situation involving more physical requirement, ability and strength. Hence, duties that need less physical requirement and intellectual ability are mostly assigned to policewomen.

As reiterated, policewomen are perceived to be limited in performance and in the duties expected of every police officer. These gender-based assumed functions of the policewomen called for the conduct of the study as it seeks to investigate the true stance of the public perception against the patriarchal definition of police roles and how it determines the variety of duties assigned to women in the Nigeria Police Force. Thus, by looking at the Police Act, Regulations and female assignment to duties in the NPF, this paper captured the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, reviewed literatures, theoretical framework, methods of data generated, discussion of findings, summary, conclusion and recommendations.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Are there duties performed by policemen that are not performed by the women police? How are officers assigned to duties? Is the gender of an officer considered when it comes to assignment of duties? Are women practically performing more duties than the stated duties in the Act? The Nigeria Police Act and Regulations, Section 121 and 122 Cap 359 LFN 1990, state the general duties of a policewoman as indicated in the literature review. These duties are considered to be feminist in nature. The Police Act limited the duties of policewomen to cases involving women and children. With the advancement of science and technology, are the policewomen fit for the general duties of the police that require more physical strength like the night

patrol and intellectual ability like criminal investigation? Does the Nigeria Police Force consider these improvements in the assignment of duties to policewomen even though the Police Act and Regulation is not amended to capture that? Hence, this research looked at how duties are assigned to female officers in the Nigeria Police Force.

OBJECTIVES

To determine how duties are assigned to policewomen in the NPF
To explore the relationship between gender and assignment to duties in the NPF
To identify the practical roles that are carried out by policewomen in the NPF

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Duties of women police in Nigeria

Generally, the duties of policewomen are stated in the Police Act and Regulations. Section 121 and 122 stated the general duties and employment of policewomen in offices respectively. Section 121 of the Nigeria Police Act and Regulations provides that, women police officers shall, as a general rule, be employed on duties which are connected with women and children, and shall be particularly employed in the following duties:

- a. Investigation and record of sexual offences against women and children.
- b. Record of statement from female witnesses and female accused persons and from children.
- c. Attendance when women and children are being interviewed by male police officers.
- d. The searching, escort and guarding of women prisoners to and from police station.
- e. School crossing duties.
- f. Crowd control, where women and children are present in large number.

To further specify when policewomen can be employed to offices in relieving male police officers, Section 122 of the Police Act prescribes additional duties as follows:

- a. Clerical duties.
- b. Telephone duties.
- c. Officer's orderly duties.

Empirical Literature

Globally, the Police Force is perceived as a male organisation as evident in the Nigeria via the recruitment requirements and the duties assigned to women after enlistment. Policewomen are seen incapable of handling situation involving more physical requirement and strength. The duties that need less physical requirement and intellectual ability are mostly assigned to women such as stated in section 121 above (Idowu 2016).

The general belief of many researchers towards the Police in terms of sex and their expected roles is that they differ to a large extent in attitudes, values, and perceptions and that the differences influence the way they do their work (Bell, 1982). (DuBois et al., 1995) associated these differences to their differing socialization experiences. The perception towards female police officers particularly, is that they have a greater commitment towards their duties and responsibilities than their male counterparts and especially when it comes to public service. And aside their calm and reassuring nature, they are also assumed to be more lenient towards citizens in the discharge of their duties as police officers (Bell, 1982). As a result, Martin (1999) included in his argument that the inclusion and recruitment of the female police personnel is indispensable in the adoption of community policing. More importantly, they shouldn't be left out when it comes to decision making in the police organization (Williams, 2012).

A stereotype study on Police Personnel revealed that most females joined the police force for power, prestige and authority and not for the excitement, fighting against crimes and helping people. However,

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the real and fair perceptions of both genders recorded that female police officers are also motivated by the chance to combat crimes and criminality. And in addendum, the males rated the motives of female police officers as higher with respect to the opportunities to assist citizens as per the dictates of their police roles and sometimes even beyond. The real perceptions with respect to their motives for power, prestige and authority still maintained the stereotyped ones regardless of the higher rate against the opposite by their male counterparts (Christie, 1996).

Apparently, Christie (1991) concluded that no shreds of evidence exist to support the factual presuppositions that the roles of the female police officers differ from their male counterparts. In similitude, the motives for joining the police force with respect to fighting crimes, assisting citizens, as well as the derived excitement is the same with their opposite sex in the profession. So also is the faulty assumption of joining the force for power, authority and prestige as both female police and recruits are likely as were the male to join for such motivations.

The roles of female police officers have been observed to include all areas of operational policing, even though what is expected of their policing role is a definition of the already assigned and well-established traditional sex-roles. This could mean that female police officers are as well accurate in the discharge of their operational duties, especially with regards to law enforcement and order maintenance (Christie, 1996). Most duties performed by the policewomen are regarded as compliment duties which are duties that can hardly be performed by policemen because of the feminist nature of the duties aforementioned (Chiang, 1994; Ehiemua, 2014). There was restriction based on the recruitment of policewoman until the intervention of women right groups to fight for the right which resulted to women taking parts in the exam. Result showed that women often perform better in the exam. Eventually, duties assigned to policemen are equally assigned to the policewomen because of the

agitation for equity in duties and equality in pay. Therefore, Policewomen like the men carry out night duties and also work under pressure during emergencies (Ehiemua, 2014).

Furthermore, Ehiemua, 2014 described other duties of the police that are result based performed adequately by the policewomen. Policewomen enforce law and reduce arguments and public restlessness or lawlessness. Policewomen also give advice to their male colleagues on violent free techniques on conflict resolution. In criminal investigation, policewomen better than the men hide their true identity to gather information about any subject or object under investigation.

Women are constantly bombarded with sexual harassment and discrimination in job assignments and promotion opportunities (Holdaway & Parker, 1998; Poole & Pogrebin, 1988). Their capacity to function as capable police officers is questioned and their competence is under constant scrutiny (Balkin, 1988; Bell, 1982; Brown & Sargent, 1995; Poole & Pogrebin, 1988). Additionally, women are ridiculed, isolated, excluded, and degraded through the use of derogatory names and offensive language (Poole & Pogrebin, 1988).

Liberal feminists argued that men and women are situated in society not only differently but also unequally. They argued that inequality is also reflected in job assignment, therefore roles assignment are sexist (Ritzer, 2011).

RESEARCH METHODS

The study targeted female officers in Zone7 (Abuja, Kaduna and Niger) of the NPF which was purposively selected because of the location of the Force Headquarters in the Zone. The study adopted a descriptive survey utilizing questionnaire to generate quantitative data. While Z test formula $n = (Z\alpha/2\sigma)^2 / D^2$ calculated for 385 respondents, Lottery method of simple random technique was used to select respondents without replacement from the rank of ASP to DIG

and analysis was based on 305 retrieved questionnaires. Key informant information (KII) was conducted with three (3) high ranking female officers (DIG, AIG and CSP) found in the Zone and twelve (12) in-depth (IDI) with officers in the ranks of DSP, SP and ASPs. SPSS was used to analyse quantitative data to generate frequency and percentage tables, qualitative data were analysed via content analysis.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

50.2% of the female officers in Zone 7 of the NPF are between the ages of 35-49 years. 31.1% of them are between the ages of 25-34 years, 6.2% and 12.5 % are between the ages of 18-24 years and 50 years and above. The information in table one also indicates the level of educational attainment and the unwillingness of the female officers to further their education after enlistment. Most of the officers (72.8%) in the Nigeria Police Force got enlisted with HND/B.Sc qualifications and only few of them further their education after enlistment. 26.6% and 0.4% improved on their qualifications to PGD, and M.Sc respectively and none of the officers has Ph.D degree. This is an indication that only few women have interest in education after enlistment and this may affect their professionalism in the field of policing. An in-depth interview also revealed that policewomen do not further their education due to unseriousness which is affecting them even in their promotional examinations (IDI/Female/CSP/Kaduna/2016).

Table1: Socio Demographic Data of the Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
The Age Distribution of the Respondents		
18-24 Years	19	6.2
25-34 Years	95	31.1
35-49 Years	153	50.2
50 Years & above	38	12.5
Total	305	100.0
Educational Qualification of the Respondents		
HND/B.Sc	222	72.8
PGD	81	26.6
M.Sc	2	0.6
PhD	0	0.0
Total	305	100.0
Rank/Designation		
ASP 1 & 2	167	54.8
DSP	43	14.5
SP	39	12.8
CSP	27	8.9
AC	13	4.3
DCP	9	3.0
CP	5	1.6
AIG	1	3
DIG	1	3
Total	305	100.0

Source: Field Survey, Jan, 2016

Table1 reveals a wide gap between the male and female officers of the NPF because most of them are between the ranks of ASP and DSP. 167 (54.8%) of the respondents are between the ranks of ASP1 & 2. 43 (14.1%) are DSP, 39 (12.8%) are SP, 27 (8.9%) are CSP, 13 (4.3%) 9 (3.0%), 5 (1.6%), 1 (0.3%) and 1 (0.3%) are ACP, DCP, CP, AIG, DIG respectively. The data reveal the involvement of few women in the top managerial level of the NPF as well as their present (low) status.

A KII with a female DIG revealed that the low representation of women in the top cadre of the NPF resulted from the late recruitment of women into the NPF and partly because of the cultural and religious belief of the people particularly from Northern Nigeria. She argued that females are brought up to follow the men not to be seen beside the men. She presented:

The situation of women starts from home; our culture does not train men and women equally. We train the women to be seen not to be heard. This is our culture and the NPF does not exist independent of this culture. It took largely from the societal culture and so, the treatment women receive in the NP would not be different from that of the larger society (KII/Female/Force Headquarters/Abuja/2016).

In another interview, a male respondent who was a DCP in one of the State Commands argued that:

Why you see men in higher ranks is because we have more men than women. Regarding this, we have our societal values and culture, determining the involvement of women in the police, most especially in the North where religion dominates the deeds and actions of everybody (IDI/male/Kaduna/2016).

Obviously, few women are found in the high ranks of the NPF because few women applied and got enlisted and largely because of the Nigerian culture that does not encourage women involvement in policing. Even with the introduction of women to the service, only few women are willing to apply. In fact, it took a lot of time before women could apply from the North. The general belief of many researchers towards the Police in terms of sex and their expected roles is that they differ to a large extent in attitudes, values and perceptions and that the differences influence the way they do their work (Bell, 1982). (DuBois et al., 1995) attached these differences to their differing socialization experiences. The perception towards female police officers particularly, is that they have a greater commitment towards their duties and responsibilities than their male counterparts and especially when it comes to public service.

Gender and job specification in the NPF

As shown in Table2, Police Rules and Regulations did not consider the gender of an officer in specifying the kinds of jobs that an officer must perform rather it specified the general duties of an officer. The Table reveals that most 184(60.3%) respondents are of the opinion that their gender did not determine their duties and where they are not assigned to certain duties it is largely for capacity reasons not gender. They claim further that officers are being assigned to duties based on the ability, experience and the knowledge an officer has over the arising issue, especially the kind of training you often receive.

Table2 Gender specification of duties exist in the NPF (commissioned officer)

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	121	39.7
No	184	60.3
Total	305	100.0

Source; Field Survey, Jan, 2016

This major argument negates some previous findings that women are constantly bombarded with sexual harassment and discrimination in job assignments and promotion opportunities (Holdaway & Parker, 1998; Poole & Pogrebin, 1988). Their capacity to function as capable police officers is questioned and their competence is under constant scrutiny (Balkin, 1988; Bell, 1982; Brown & Sargent, 1995; Poole & Pogrebin, 1988). On the other hand, 121(39.7%) of the respondents believe that they are not allowed to carry out some functions in the NPF simply because they are women and this limitation affects their performance as well as their career by not allowing them to exhibit their potential and carry out police functions to the best of their ability. From the finding, the police rules and regulations did not specify duties of the female senior or commissioned officers except the rank and files as presented in Section 121 of the Nigeria Police Act and Regulations (see page 2). Whether male or female, the police rules and regulations generally specify the duties of officers as presented in section 309 of the rules.

In addition to the major argument, a female DSP who was once a DPO in one of the divisions of a State Command reports that:

...the police did not think of women before its establishment, it is meant for men: as a result it does not specify or limit the women to specific area(s) of the police duties. For instance, when I was the DPO one of our command in Kaduna, there was a riot in the area, no going out nor coming in, the then Commissioner of Police tried to come in to assist with other officers but they could not gain access that was how they went back. I was left alone to manage the situation and it was a religious fight. I am a Christian, the Muslims were stoning and calling me names, and the Christians were accusing me that I was afraid of the Muslims, and that that was why I refused to take a decision against them. Now look at this situation, as a female I had to think

very well before taking any action in order to also save my own life. Yet, don't forget I was the only senior officer to give command in the division. The commissioner called and said, look you're in charge of your division so may God help you, and that was it. Therefore, I will continue to support that ability of an officers should continue to determine what an officer does (IDI/Female/Command headquarters/Kaduna/2016).

From this quotation, officers are assigned to duties based on their rank and the individual capacity not gender. This DPO would have been assisted by all means if she was not competent to settle and calm down the situation. Apparently, Christie (1991) concluded that no shreds of evidence exist to support the factual presuppositions that the roles of the female police officers differ from their male counterparts. In similitude, the motives for joining the police force with respect to fighting crimes, assisting citizens, as well as the derived excitement is the same with their opposite sex in the profession. So also is the faulty assumption of joining the force for power, authority and prestige as both female police and recruits are likely as were the male to join for such motivations.

The roles of female police officers have been observed to include all areas of operational policing, even though what is expected of their policing role is a definition of the already assigned and well-established traditional sex-roles. This could mean that female police officers are as well accurate in the discharge of their operational duties, especially with regards to law enforcement and order maintenance (Christie, 1996). Most duties performed by the policewomen are regarded as compliment duties which are duties that can hardly be performed by policemen because of the feminist nature of the duties aforementioned (Chiang, 1994; Ehiemua, 2014).

The Liberal feminist also believes that the policewomen in the NPF like any other human beings have their own essential features, and capacities to reason. Another respondent argues that it took a nerve for the Commissioner to have confidence in her and that was based on her performance. Accordingly, a senior female officer argues *"It takes gut for the men to work with the women, for men to say she can do it, let's give it to her"* (IDI/Female/Force Headquarter/Abuja/2016).

Contrary to the major argument, an ACP in one of the State Commands argues that Police Rules and Regulations considers the gender of an officer in assigning officers to duty most especially during violent control, maintenance of Orders etc, and at the same time, determines how officers carry out their duties such as charging cases and preventing crime. He further states that:

The PRR consider your gender, initially women in the NPF are limited to administrative duties. But with modernisations, I mean improved technology; women are also assigned to special duties. You see, in every organisation, there is a kind of gender consideration for women. Where you have a conflict or riot with internally displaced persons, you don't have only men affected, women are also affected so, we have women taking care of the women and men for men (IDI/male/Command Headquarter/Kaduna).

Work/roles assigned to women in the NPF

Table3 further reveals the ideal duties performed by policewomen in the present dispensation. Practically, policewomen are not limited to any specific duties; job assignment is done based on officers' ability, especially, the senior or officer's cadre. Up to 49.8% of the respondents reported that no aspect(s) of the police duties that is not assigned to female officers. This information also confirms that the gender of an officer does not determine the kinds of duties that are given to the officers in the NPF; the female performs all the general

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duties of the police including night patrols and Criminal Investigations. However, 14.1% claim that they are only assigned to carry out investigation among other duties of the Police Force. While 10.2% argue that they only perform administrative functions, 6.2%, 12.1%, 7.5% carry out patrol, control traffic and arrest suspect respectively. To complement this information, the CP (male) of one of the State Command reports:

There is no duty I don't assign to the female officers in this state and they are doing wonderfully well. We have women that carry gun at night especially the mobile. We have a woman who is an Area Commander, I have a woman DPO; what is left from the police functions/duties that a woman is left out? Mind you, these women are doing greatly well. Don't also forget that we have a woman as the Force Police Public Relation Officer (FPPRO). She is the first female Force Public Relation Officer in Nigeria (KII/Male/Kaduna/2016)

Similarly, during the KII with the most senior female officer, she responds that:

The police rules and regulations did not assign officers to duties based on their gender especially when you are an officer. The rules consider only rank of an officer when assigning officers to duties. When it is necessary, then, rank and files officers are involved not officer's cadre. As far as I am concerned, no duty that women do not do in the NPF (KII/Female/Police Headquarter/Abuja/2016)

Table3. The work/roles that are being performed by policewomen

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Investigation	43	14.1
Administration	31	10.2
Patrol	19	6.2
Traffic Control	37	12.1
Arresting Suspect	23	7.5
All of the above	152	49.8
Total	305	100.0

Source: Field Survey, Jan, 2016

It is obvious that, irrespective of the nature of the police duties, women are allowed to carry out all the (general) duties of the NPF as represented in the table3. In relation to this, another female CSP officer opines:

...when you get to the top, no discrimination, but rank and files, there are still some duties that may not be assigned to you. Though, some are still much ready to do the work. Like this division, there is a rank and file officer that goes on patrol and guard. There is no any police duty assigned to her that she will not do, just like the men (IDI/Female/State Command headquarter/Niger/2016).

The police force only considers the ability of an officer before he or she is assigned to duties. Based on this, emphasis is mostly on the training and regular courses an officer attends and passes. Virtually all duties are assigned to women in the NPF which indicates the

readiness of some of the female officers to compete with their male counterparts.

Policewomen and the general duties of the Police Force

Duties performed by policewomen in the NPF are related to the general duties of the police. Table4 reports that 88.9% of policewomen in the NPF perform duties that are related to general duties. They further claim that the duties are not only related to the general duties of the police force but they are also the major prerequisite to the career development of any officer in the NPF as shown table4. Only 11.1% argue that the duties they perform in the NPF are not in any way related to the general duties of the Police Force.

Table4: The roles in Table (3) are related to the general duties of the NPF

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	271	88.9
No	34	11.1
Total	305	100.0

Source: Field Survey, Jan, 2016

To the feminist theorists, policewomen may claim equality with their male counterpart on the basis of capacity and ability; that their inequality is a product of culture and religious belief. They further argued that gender equality can also be strengthened in the NPF by reviewing the Police Act and Regulations to capture all the duties performed by women in the police force.

Policing, a team work

Table5 shows coexistence and group support from officers in the NPF. Officers work in team in the NPF which is a clear indication that the modern police do not need an officer to be "macho" or to

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prove masculine traits before he or she can perform well. While 84.3 % of the respondents report that they work in team with their colleagues and do not require any masculine feature, only 15.7% argue that they work independently in the NPF. Going by the majority, a CSP who is a DPO argues that:

I have a woman sergeant here who works closely with her team without giving any excuse. She goes for night patrol, in fact, she leads the team at times and make sure she covers all are points and check her boys in their various points. To me, this is also another reason men and women should be given equal training because it a matter of training (IDI/Female/Command Headquarter/Niger/2016).

Clearly, police work is better done in team, partly because of the dangers involved in the job. As well, this result clears the general perception of the male police officers that the policewomen working in patrol do not measure up to their social and physiological demands and expectations (Balkin, 1988; Brown & Sargent, 1995; Poole & Pogrebin, 1998). As seen worldwide, policing involves officers moving around the nooks and cranny in their vehicles with communication gadgets except for Criminal Investigation Department where officers need to be as much as possible secretive by hiding their identity.

Table5:Officers work in team/ independently

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
In team	257	84.3
Independently	48	15.7
Total	305	100.0

Source: Field Survey, Jan, 2016

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

After enlistment, men and women are equally placed in terms of job assignment in the NPF. The rules do not specify the kinds of duties that must be carried out by female officers rather the duties that must be performed by officers whether male or female. The rules do not practically consider gender when it comes to job specification (60.3%) except on rank and files. Unlike Liberal feminists who argued that men and women are situated in society not only differently but also unequally (Ritzer, 2011), this result negates the findings of Holdaway & Parker (1998); Poole & Pogrebin (1988) that women are constantly bombarded with sexual harassment and discrimination in job assignments. Officers (men or women) work in team for better result (84.3%). Regarding police duties, there is no form of duty that is not assigned to women as reported by 49.8% of the respondents. These duties which are the necessary prerequisite to officer's career development (88.9%) range from Investigation (14.1%), Administration (10.2%) and Patrol (6.2%) to Arresting Suspect (7.5%). Both KII and IDI further strengthen the fact that there is no duty that is not assigned to women. Therefore, gender of an officer is not considered when it comes to assignment of duties, only the ranks are considered. Hence, it was recommended that:

- i. Police Act and Regulations should be reviewed to include all the duties performed by policewomen.
- ii. After enlistment, policewomen should improve on their educational qualifications since job assignment is based on experience and ranks. Both policewomen and men should be encouraged to improve on their education in addition to the regular training and professional courses.
- iii. To strengthen equity in the NPF, emphasis should continue to be on individual's ability and capacity for job specification.
- iv. Gender does not determine the assigning of officers to duties except on rank and files, so whether rank and files or officer's cadre, officers should not be stratified by gender rather by ranks.

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