Community Policing in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of Current Developments

Gilbert Enyidah–Okey Ordu[1] & Macpherson U Nnam[2]
Federal University Ndufu–Alike Ikwo, Ebonyi State, Nigeria

Abstract
This article critically examines the current developments in community policing in Nigeria. Community policing is a strong partnership, collaborative efforts of police and members of the public with a view to protecting lives and property at the neighbourhood level. With effective community policing in place, public safety is guaranteed. It increases public awareness that victims and their offenders are community members, and that police are both community members and State agents of social control, who are concerned about crime prevention and control in society where they are also members. This policing approach helps police to identify, analyse and incisively address societal problems with full supports of community members. Police-community partnership, police-community information sharing, and police involvement in community affairs as salient programmes/strategies for effective community policing equally obtain in Nigeria. However, challenges such as bribery and corruption, human rights abuse, public loss of trust/confidence, meddlesome attitudes of political godfathers in police-community affairs, lack of visionary schemes, and unnecessary use of coercion and threats to enforce public compliance with rules, have frustrated every effort to improve and stabilise police-public co-operation which is a precondition for effective community policing. It is therefore high time the Nigeria police and local residents began to imbibe the culture of rectitude, social justice, and total conscience-overhauling so as to reach an understanding and maintain mutual support necessary for proactive community policing in the country.

Keywords: Community Policing, Critical Analysis, Developments, Neighbourhood Watch, Nigeria.

Introduction

The International Code of Enforcement Ethics reveals the primary reason for establishing formal police system in any society thus: as a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve mankind and property; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception; the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence and disorder; and to respect constitutional rights of all the men to liberty, equity and justice (Qadri, 2005). Admittedly, the main role of the police is

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[1] Department of Criminology and Security Studies, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, PMB 1010, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Email: ordugil@yahoo.com
[2] Department of Criminology and Security Studies, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Federal University Ndufu-Alike, Ikwo, PMB 1010, Ebonyi State, Nigeria. Email: icharilife@yahoo.com

to enforce law and order, safeguard lives and property, and render other essential services in the society. Put in a different way, fighting crimes and criminals is so difficult that the police and other law enforcement agencies alone cannot perform this task and achieve maximum positive results. Since the most visible part of criminal activities take place at the neighbourhood level, policing agencies need public support and co-operation. Intensive partnership and collaborative efforts of both the formal and informal agents of social control remain preconditions for a possible near 'crime-free' society (a complete crime-free society is utopia); in other words, the idea will lead to a great success in crime prevention and control in the community.

However, the police-public relationship has long been estranged, thereby making mutual supports very difficult to establish between the two social actors. That is, every effort to bring the police close to the public, and for community members to see the police as their friends, who require their assistance in policing the society that belongs to both of them, an end in futility. In essence, there must be a solution to this problem. According to Siegel (2008, p. 343), "to remedy this situation while improving the quality of their services, police departments have experimented with new forms of law enforcement, referred to as community policing and problem-oriented policing". From the same source, community policing is a style of policing that requires departments to reshape their forces into community change agents in order to work with citizens to reduce crime at the neighbourhood level. Problem-oriented policing, on the other hand, is a proactive form of policing; rather than responding to crime after it occurs, police identify and respond to potential problems before they occur (Siegel, 2008). The art of community policing and problem-oriented policing are complementary, and none of these approaches can succeed in policing the community without the assistance and co-operation of the public. This is so because the most noticeable aspect of crime-transactions usually occurs at the community level where victims and their offenders live together.

Traditional societies, including Nigeria employed the system of 'hue and cry', which literally means angry protests embarked upon by a group of people over something, but contextually refers to a system of community policing whereby members of the community unite with State agents of social control to arrest criminals (for a similar argument, see also Wrobleski & Hess, 2006). Specifically, African societies of old used their various traditional institutions to achieve and maintain maximum level of public safety, orderliness and conformity. With the passage of time, these institutions recorded wide-ranging progress and success in curtailing antisocial conducts by forming a synergy with the formal policing agencies, particularly the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) through community policing (Nnam, Agboti & Otu, 2013). Across cultures and civilisations, community-policing has always been emphasized, encouraged and recommended by individuals, State and non-State social control actors as well as crime scholars as a safety valve for effective policing of society. Community policing entails a systematic involvement and inclusion of credible local guards, vigilance groups, able-bodied civilian youths, and traditional rulers and chiefs into the conventional police subsystem for the purpose of achieving a far-reaching success in crime prevention and control at the grassroots.

Neighbourhood watch, as community policing is known as in some quarters, describes a situation whereby or system in which the police and community members establish "citizen advisory committees that would open up channels of communication between

police officers and the community" (Sykes, 1978, p. 394). Citizen advisory committees are not only composed of police personnel, but also members of the business community, clergy, and some community leaders and members. All these community policing agents are duly recognised in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, as amended) and the 2004 Police Reform/Police Act, where the importance of this policing mechanism is acknowledged as a powerful tool for solving crime-problem in the country. Since that period, the country is still battling to embrace international best practice regarding policing. Hitherto, the Nigeria police is still developing strategies for improving its vision (modern community policing) by departing from the non-democratic platform where enforcement of law and order maintenance utilised coerciveness, brutality and disregard for fundamental human rights.

The global community is transiting from traditional form of policing to a systematic and formalised community policing (Okiro, 2007). Of course, there is a paradigm shift from the traditional police system to community-participatory system, community policing. Community policing is a system that unites members of the society with police. It gets the community directly involved in solving both criminal and civil disorders and makes the community involved in judicial settlements of societal problems. The essence of this is to involve the community in the protection of the citizenry and improvement of police-community relationships for effective policing of society. In essence, therefore, this paper aims at achieving three objectives: to examine the various strategies for effective community policing in Nigeria, to identify the obstacles to community policing in Nigeria, and to determine how the police and the public could unite to achieve sustainable community policing in Nigeria.

Strategies/Programmes for Effective Community Policing in Nigeria

For community policing to succeed in Nigeria and perhaps in any society, three essential practical strategies are strongly advocated in this paper, viz: police-community partnership, police-community information sharing, and police involvement in community affairs. Police-community partnership programme is a strategy for making the public a serious partner in policing the community. This works by establishing the citizen advisory committees, which open channels of communication between the police and the public. These committees are usually composed of well-established members of the society who are charismatic and have the interest of the general community at heart. Ren, Cao, Lovrich and Gaffney (2005) are of the view that this programme permits the police to meet with local residents in order to discuss crime in the neighbourhood and to use personal initiative to solve problems. Even extant study, as earlier observed, acknowledged the significance of police-community partnership programme. For instance, police and community members establish "citizen advisory committees that would open up channels of communication between police and the community" (Sykes, 1978, p. 394).

In Nigeria, for instance, true representatives of citizen advisory committees are traditional rulers and members of their cabinet, town union and opinion leaders, and youth leaders. The committees meet regularly with police to discuss their welfare, crime related problems, police-community relationships, and then work out modalities on how to combat crime to the barest minimum. By implication, the committee members are equally security agents who pull their resources together with that of the conventional police in the fight against crime and criminals. When this synergy is formed, the general public "may find that officers are more respectful of citizenry; a condition that helps lower

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the number of complaints and improves community relations" (Davis, Mateu-Gelabert & Miller, 2005, p. 231). Although, whatever might be the need to ease tensions resulting from crime and criminalities in the community, the State retains the ultimate power to deal with offences and offenders while negotiating both compliance and co-operation with the community. Beyond this, the creation of citizen advisory committees paves way for the police system to succeed in the war against crime.

The poor are more likely to suffer disproportionally for breaking the same law than the rich. The realisation of this ideal is important, particularly when there are disparities between the rich and the poor in the police treatment patterns (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2000). In criminal investigation, corruption is said to be present in most cases and is usually determined by the extent of bribe given by either parties to a case. The party that gives more is likely to influence the direction of investigation in his or her favour (Dambazau, 2007). Fortunately, police-community partnership programme has been instituted to remedy the situation. This programme always strives to maintain a balance and equilibrium, and democratic social order which are vital approaches to effective community policing in Nigeria. Under this programme, the police are expected to be fair in their enforcement of the law and also accountable to the citizenry instead of preying on them. The police are not expected to impose themselves on the community or become autonomous agents, driving the community as an entity by 'force' or 'fire' as tenable in Nigeria. The police are expected to act as public servants and civilised agents of peace, securing the society in a uniformly, morally and socially acceptable, democratic manner. This should be done without recourse to partiality and perverting the course of justice based on socioeconomic status and social background to subject(s) or parties involved.

Police-community information sharing is the second significant strategy for effective community policing. In community policing, information sharing helps the police to establish the identity of crime suspects. When there is discrepancy between individuals' actual social identity and their perceived identity, it leads to error and social control agents are not immune to error (Kelly & Clarke, 2003). Information sharing provides the facts necessary for bringing violators before the court, which is an approach that enhances community policing (Quinney, 1974). Perhaps, on the basis of this, it is established that people seek information for different needs and from varying sources. Their needs and reasons could range from educational, research, professional, recreational, security to pecuniary, or for personal development. Man by nature is security conscious, and are pushed to seek information so as to answer the 'why', 'what', 'when' and 'how' questions which are tied to police-community information sharing (see also Okogwu & Nnam, 2013). Therefore, citizens' participation in sharing information with police will assists in gathering socio-demographic data that could help to control the errors and difficulties sometimes encountered in the course of identifying law violators. Maintaining a good relationship between the police and community remains the primary means of overcoming the barrier in information gathering and dissemination, which gives rise to effective community policing. The police-community information sharing tends to provide police with vital crime information about a suspect and his or her activities and whereabouts. This development, undoubtedly, is useful in solving multitude of challenges confronting community policing in Nigeria. The essence of information sharing in community policing is to either deter crime before it occurs or tracks down offender and at the long-run achieve huge success in crime reduction.

Finally, the police involvement in community affairs is another strong strategy that allows the police to display themselves as both private citizens and State agents of social control. Community policing under this programme or strategy presents the police as servants of the society who, should in a reasonable manner, enforce law and order and ensure public compliance with policies. Extant studies also attest that the involvement of police in community affairs has actually yielded fruitful results. For instance, Quinney (1974) affirmed that when the community collaborates with police personnel in maintaining social order, it helps the legal system also to be increasingly used in criminal justice administration. The police are viable instrument for building an inclusive and organised community policing in Nigeria. Police involvement in community affairs facilitates rapid and timely control of persistence rebellion, whether in outright political processes or behaviour that otherwise, violates the rules of the society. Community policing also helps the State policing actors to exercise its repressive force on the people in order to achieve compliance with the law (see also Kelly & Clark, 2003). This technique can be employed only in a physically and socially disorganised community. In more disorganised areas, some experts pointed out, police use aggressive tactics to reduce crime and 'take back the streets' before building relations with community leaders (Siegel, 2008 citing Nolan, Conti & McDevitt, 2004).

Obstacles to Community Policing in Nigeria

Quite naturally, every social system or subsystem is confronted with a number of challenges that hampers its operational and management performances, and community policing is not an exception. Community policing is awash with obstacles, namely, bribery and corruption, selective enforcement of law, community negative perception of police, public loss of trust and confidence, inadequate manpower, poor community relations, 'godfatherism', lack of visionary schemes, among others. Bribery-cum-corruption is particularly systemic in the Nigeria police formation; a situation which some observers in the country referred to as an intractable problem (see Alemika, 1999; Karimu, 2015). In specific terms, graft has been implicated as police officers' major flaw that makes them not to gain public support, confidence and co-operation needed for effective community policing in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the police organisation in Nigeria is facing serious obstacles which have continued to affect its legitimacy and the performance of its functions of crime prevention, control, or management. These challenges include poor funding by the government, systemic corruption and internal decadence, inadequate manpower, partisanship, ethnicity, lack of accountability, defects in constitutional provisions, and apparent lack of public confidence, further leading to weak or low legitimacy (Otu & Aro, 2013). In community policing, the community tend to control the police and get them corrupt in the process. The implication is that when the police are controlled by the community, the police connive at their illegal activities (Carter, 2002). This auspicious security measure or programme has suffered for many years under the taint of corruption. The crime of graft is getting something of value through dishonest or unfair means, especially using political connections or community relationships. On this note, the police may deliberately use illegal or unconstitutional means to make arrests and, in the process, ensure that the charges are thrown out of court. Police corruption is indeed multidimensional and complex; it takes various forms within and outside the police organisation. The rot and decadence in the police subsystem are: include kickbacks, favouritism, recruitment

malpractice, partisanship, complicity, whitewash and cover-up, and romantic exuberances and compensation. All these shortcomings, we must admit, are inimical to effective community policing in Nigeria.

One of the major setbacks in community policing is the selective enforcement of law syndrome that is commonplace in Nigeria. The poor and minority groups in the community tend to alienate themselves from the police because most of the law enforcement operations focus on the behaviours of the poor, minorities, downtrodden and underprivileged members of the society. The problem centres on widespread favouritism to a group of politicians and privileged upper class community members. Hess, Markson and Stein (1992) admitted that politicians, business elite and community leaders are not policed as the poor and underprivileged are being policed; the former group is granted virtual monopoly in crime as they are connected with criminal gangs and syndicates (as well as policymakers themselves). This situation is more pronounced in Nigeria where selective enforcement of law is the norm rather than the exception. Here, the police connive with organised criminals who are mainly political leaders or highly placed public office holders to exploiting the citizenry and undermine their plight at will. Expectedly, the populace may not be comfortable with the police unholy alliance and allegiance with community members whose source of affluence is perceived or traceable to crime or other corrupt practises. This unholy alliance is anchored in the philosophy of 'familiarisation', which Hess *et al.* (1992) succinctly defined as a medium through which the police (and disgruntled stakeholders in a society) conceal the amount of money they amassed through illegal means.

On that score, the community has negative perception of the police. Alemika (1988) argued that the negative community perception of police has impacts on their job performances. The community sometimes turns against the police when they (police) use coercion to secure social control. The police may use all the available forces or violence to sustain its political authority. The negative attitudes of the public towards the police tend to clash with the power of the State to maintain peace and order. The community negative perception of police affects their ability to remain focus and maintain professionalism. In community policing, police retain its power to exercise force in any situation. According to a notable Foundation, the Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria (CLEEN), the police play important roles without which the sustenance of order, legality, development and democracy may be difficult. Understanding the fact that police act as representatives of the State and legitimate users of force whenever it is necessary, helps to explain the corresponding negative character and attitudes of police officers in many situations (Alemika & Chukwuma, 1999).

Despite the success, police managers still face resistance from some experienced officers who hold traditional law-and-order values and question the utility of community policing model. It is unlikely that this innovative programme can enjoy long-term success unless veteran officers form a commitment to the values of community policing (Ford, Weissbein & Plamondon, 2003 cited in Siegel, 2008). Another significant obstacle to effective community policing is again the public loss of trust and confidence in police work. The community has lost confidence in police due to police brutality, bribery and corruption, coerciveness, and lack of proper channels of communication. As a result, the community no longer sees police as valuable instrument for the maintenance of peace and orders. When the police alienate themselves from the community, the relationship becomes

blunt, and this presents police to the community as aliens invading the society. When crime occurs in the community, the community alienate themselves from the police, and it becomes very difficult to locate or identify the perpetrators without the help and co-operation of the community. This situation is pathetic to police operations and capable of infiltrating frustration on police duties.

For the police to surmount the identifiable enormous community policing challenges in Nigeria, the system must have sufficient qualified manpower. Unfortunately, inadequate manpower has been a major obstacle confronting effective community policing in the country. Akuul (2011) stated that inadequate manpower and poor deployment of personnel are the stumbling blocks to effective community policing in Nigeria. The Nigeria police experience endemic problems with recruiting, training, inefficiency and indiscipline, and lack of expertise in specialised fields. Corruption and dishonesty are widespread, thus engendering a low level of public confidence, failure to report crime and tendencies to resort to self-help policing (Dambazau, 2007), rather than true community policing. This problem is compounded as recruitment and promotion of police personnel, and application of law and justice are in the hands of political godfather. While Adebayo & Ojo (2009) suggested that poorly developed manpower resources and management weaken effective community policing, Uma & Eboh (2013) argued that poor staff promotion, poor incentives and weak operational strategies demoralise the police and weaken their functional capabilities. An organisation such as police need carefully selected personnel for the execution of its critical duties in the community (The Guardian, 2000). The police personnel are the bedrock power of the State's political instrument, capable of securing the safety, peace and order in the society.

Essentially, where the police system is understaffed, overworked and overstressed, they would eventually appear weak, stressed out, fatigue and sleepy on duty posts or in their patrol vehicles (Reiner, 1993; Odinkalu, 2005). Shortage of manpower, inadequate salary structures, irregular payment of salaries and lengthy hours from one duty post to another with stagnant salary payment have significant negative impacts on Nigeria police officers (Dike, 2010). According to the Nigeria Police Annual Report (NPAR), police personnel are unable to meet professional and family commitments owing to poor remuneration, poor working environment and poor accommodation, and many of them seem not to understand their roles and responsibilities as a result of inadequate training (NPAR, 2008). According to this report, when a workforce suffers from lack of funding and poor condition of service, it will cause personnel to lose motivation and morale support. Poor and meagre salaries destroy their moral; a situation which Aluko (2005) explained that it invokes sociological and psychological effects in community policing. We re-emphasize in this paper that poor police-community relations also hamper effective community policing. Uma and Eboh (2013) assented to this view when they stated that the police have communication glitch with the community while trying to maintain some degree of social control. With this gap in communication, the Nigeria police become ineffective in meeting the demands of the general public and in fulfilling their own 'contract' in community relation approach. As a result, effective community policing is weakened, as the public perceive the police as wicked, rude, and unprofessional in dealing with community problems and therefore withdraw their supports.

Apparently, 'godfatherism' in Nigeria is an Achilles' heel in community policing. The community policing and other activities of the police are influenced by meddlesome political godfathers, who direct the pendulum of policing, law, security and justice in the

country–this process or activity is referred to as 'godfatherism'. To some observers like Onyeozili (2005, p. 41),'godfatherism' is the "funding and abetting of vices and shielding connected criminals from justice by government agents and highly placed officials entrusted with the power and authority to investigate and prosecute such vices". When some powerful Nigerians nurture and incubate criminals, the police are presented with the situation of not being successful in removing the criminals from the community. The godfathers thwart police investigation, perverts justice, and short down prosecutions of murderers by exercising their closeness to the power-house. Many godfathers sponsor social vices through immoral action and shield many criminals from successful prosecutions (Black, 1980).

Lack of or ill-influenced visionary schemes are serious hindrances to effective community policing in Nigeria. The policies of police, including reforms, seem not to be moving forward and decisive. Such visionary programmes as police-community partnership, police-community information sharing, police involvement in community affairs are, in the real sense of it, but, grossly lacking in the Nigeria police system. The consequence of this observable weakness is stagnation or unprofessionalism in police mode of operations. Like the Nigeria police, many public officeholders in the country (appointed or elected) do not have clear and in-depth knowledge of the vision, mission, ethical, technical and functional demands and inner workings of the position they are occupying or the authority they represent. Even as routine operations and management appear stagnant, little or no attention is given to them (see also Dike, 2010). Hence, many significant visionary schemes (e.g. the said strategies for effective community policing) that are imperative for 21st century community policing are overlooked and/or ignored in Nigeria. Emphatically, suffice to say that lack of objective visionary programmes is a major obstacle to an ideal, sustainable community policing in the country.

Attitudes of Police towards Community Policing

A study conducted in 1999 by the Centre for Law Enforcement Education (CLEEN) and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) revealed that the majority of Nigerians, (including the Police Officers interviewed) maintained that the Nigerian police were adversely clung to colonial mentality and practices, adversely affected by prolonged military rule, and inadequately trained for community policing in a post-dictatorship Nigeria (CLEEN & NHRC, 1999). The long military rule in Nigeria, which influenced the attitude of the police, is indeed a major setback that weakened the informal community policing and also delayed the development of modern, democratic community policing in the country. The art or science of policing is so complex that no single agent of social control, whether formal or informal, military or paramilitary, can achieve maximum positive results by solely using militarism or military-like operational methods: repressiveness and exclusion, instead of forming synergy with or seeking shared supports from allied civil institution(s).

Modern policing has been predominantly a State responsibility. Yet, police, as the most visible agent of social control in a democratic society should partner with the host community for a successful crime mapping out strategies for apprehension of offenders. This partnership situation is presently helping the police apprehend the law violators as seen in bank robbery case in Afikpo North Local Government Area (LGA) of Ebonyi State, Nigerian, where the community and police collaborated in solving a huge bank

robbery case in the area (for a similar argument, see Otu, 2010; Otu & Elechi, 2015). Community policing is essential because of the obvious dearth of manpower in the Nigeria police system; the fact that most criminal activities are committed or aided and abetted by some community members and visitors, vis-à-vis, the police officers who are also community members are also benefiting from the public involvement in police work as both collaborate in crime fighting techniques. Moreover, community policing opens the doors for communication channels between the public and police to address their concerns on crime waves, police corruption, bribery, partisanship, discrimination in arrests, brutality, and poor police-public relations (see also Alemika & Chukwuma, 2003 cited in Isima & Okenyodo, 2009; Dambazau, 2007; Adebayo & Ojo, 2009). Public forum with police also spurred stakeholders and policymakers to call for a number of reforms in the system. Indeed, it has been realised that community policing is one of the key security measures that can reduce our 'crime problem' to the barest minimum (if not serve as a panacea for it, with the passage of time). It is on this common ground that the former President of Nigeria, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, after series of brainstorming and interactive sessions with the police management and public representatives, officially introduced an inclusive and citizen-oriented community policing system on 27th April, 2004 as a strong springboard for effective policing in the nation.

From the foregoing analysis, there is no gainsaying the fact that a strong police-public co-operation is an essential precondition for effective community policing. To say the least, a successful community policing is accomplished through reciprocal agreement bound in trust and confidence entered into by the police and members of the public. The popular slogan, 'police are the public and the public are the police', explains the complementary roles of these two social actors in policing society. It may be difficult for police to effectively perform some of their statutory functions or operations without the honest co-operation of some community members. This security arrangement also helps in checking and balancing the excesses of police officers, especially those attached to political and public office holders.

Clearly, good police-community relations strengthen security network and thus leads to a significant reduction in criminal activities. The huge success recorded so far by the Nigeria police in crime prevention and control is largely attributed to police partnership with community leaders, youths, age grade associations and other informal security networks (Igbo, 2007; Otu, 2011; Nnam, *et al.*, 2013). Community policing is an avenue for both the public and the police to learn and understand each more/well and thereby facilitating mutual trust and aid between them. This does not in any way suggest that police now share their legitimacy with the public, or are not independent or strong enough to fight crime and criminals. Rather, this arrangement is to jettison the workload of officers and to complement their efforts in a complex and runaway society with its attendant burgeoning crime wave. Despite the police-community partnership, police still maintain the ethical standard of police work which is characterised by regimentation; confidentiality; avoidance of over-familiarity and keeping of routine, and application of discretionary powers, particularly in relation to rigidity in attitude and directing operational control and methods. Reiner (1993) described police as special carriers of the State's bedrock power and monopoly of legitimate use of force to maintain law and order, as well as protect lives and property in society.

As cumbersome as police duties are, partnering with the community will ease police functions in the areas of collaborative information gathering and sharing, police-

community familiarisation, and appraisal of police-public relations for reconciliation and strengthening. This necessitated the incorporation of the basic tenets of community policing into the police curricula which are (community policing as a course) taught to all cadres in the Nigerian Police Academy or training schools. Partnering community members are also specially trained and education on the underlying principles of this security system. Sometimes, certain parts of the police manuals and constitution are extracted and issued to civilian members to keep abreast of developments regarding participation and involvement in community policing. Even some disciplines like Criminology in the conventional Nigerian Universities are currently offering community policing and related courses. Here, police officers who are members of the community or community members who are enlisted into the force are methodically exposed to the practices and theories of community policing. And proper assimilation of this policing values is so vital that the police see community involvement in police work as a catalyst for a constructive change that would stimulate a robust collaborations, joint security efforts to end the 'war on crime' at the neighbourhood level.

Towards Sustainable Community Policing in Nigeria: The Role of Police and the Public

Since the society creates rules to combat crimes and criminals, law enforcement agencies (the police precisely) are also created to enforce rules that are moulded into law. The community policing is a new paradigm shift for effective policing in Nigeria. It started out as a drive to convince the world of the moral necessity to adopt a new method of policing, and later became a formal organisation devoted to the enforcement of law in the community. The final outcome of this moral crusade is the establishment of community policing. On the other hand, members of the society must understand the motives and interests of police as law enforcement agents. The obvious interest is to enforce the laws, maintain peace and order, and secure compliance with the community and society at large; hence, their co-operation is highly needed to achieve this great height. Both the police and community members owe each other moral obligation to maintain a hitch-free community policing. Onyeozili (2005) noted that full public co-operation with the police is an ingredient necessary for effective law enforcement and order maintenance; but this public co-operation with the police is not given, it has to be earned. Thus, earning and retaining positive public image requires the police to place the general public's interest as the ultimate and paramount.

Although some policemen undoubtedly have keen interest in stamping out evil, it is probably much more typical for the Nigeria police to have a detached objective view of their job in that manner. In community policing, the interest is not so much focused on preventing evil, they are mainly concerned with executing their job as law enforcement agents and to maintain peace and order. The existence of laws creates justification for community policing as a profession (Okiro, 2007). As physicians, lawyers, and other professionals win respect of their clients and maintain respectful, healthy relationship with them, the police methodically want to justify their work and win the respect of others in the society. It is very necessary for the police to win respect and recognition from the public; otherwise, their feeling of security on the job would be lost (Kelly & Clark, 2003). Hence, the police devote a great deal of time coercing the public into respecting them. In this manner, an individual (even a law-abiding citizen) may be labelled as deviant or

criminal—not because he/she actually broke the law—but because he/she did not show respect to the police.

In justifying community policing as a profession, community policing agents must demonstrate to the society that the law which they are enforcing is contemporarily valid. The law enforcers must ensure that law was broken; or else, the enforcement attempts would be ineffective and undemocratic. For instance, if plying dual-carriage roads by motor cyclists in State capital territories was generally prohibited in the Edicts (State laws in Nigeria), and later amended as non-prohibited act, law enforcement agents must be validated with such laws in order to be effective and knowledgeable about their profession. Indeed, both the Nigeria police and community members should keep abreast of development and ever-changing trends in political reconstruction, social engineering and legal dynamics to enable them unite to achieve sustainable community policing in the country. This is not far from the stance of the International Code of Enforcement Ethics earlier cited in this paper: as a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve mankind and property; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception; the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence and disorder; and to respect constitutional rights of all the men to liberty, equity and justice (Qadri, 2005).

But in a situation where violations of rules are widespread and threaten public safety as well as in a volatile neighbourhood, the police can then adopt a repressive approach towards solving social problems. The ineptitude of the police can only be observed in this regard if they refuse or fail to restore good public relationships after the incident(s). In more disorganised areas, according to Nolan, Conti and McDevitt (2004) as recorded in Siegel (2008, p. 343), "police use aggressive tactics to reduce crime and 'take back the streets' before building relations with community leaders". Ordinarily, a police officer has a great deal of discretion to utilise in the course of his or her duty. The police need to take time to resolve problems as they are noticed. In this way, the police must establish priorities in dealing with the identified issues. Similarly, the general attitudes of the police in dealing with problems must remain professional as they prioritise which problem to tackle with first. For instance, drug users believe that police do not consider the use of certain quantity of marijuana by an adult of sound mind to be 'unlawful' and as dangerous as the use of "methadone and ineperidine, which belong to the class of opiates" (Clinard & Meier, 2008, p. 215). Nevertheless, opiate users commit other crimes such as theft or prostitution in order to get drugs while marijuana users do not (Kelly& Clark, 2003). In this situation, police use a selective enforcement approach to decide which crime to deal with or which set of criminals to apprehend.

Conclusion

Community policing, otherwise known as neighbourhood watch, is both a philosophical and practical approach to crime prevention and control, which entails full involvement and participation of community members. It is an art of policing that helps to improve the performance of the police in crime detection, prevention and control, which ordinarily, would have diminished the quality of police work and relationship with the public, if the local residents were excluded in the art (policing). Community policing shares commonalities with problem-oriented policing in many aspects, among which is, both approaches aim at identifying and combating crime from the onset (before they occur) while maintaining balance and control in the community with the aid of the

public. Community policing plays positive and significant roles in peace talks, promotion of peaceful coexistence, initiating programmes and interventions to check or combat insecurity and threats to public order at the neighbourhood level; hence, the term 'neighbourhood watch'. For the Nigeria police to achieve this end, strategies or programmes for effective community policing as progressively discussed in this paper must be followed to the letter. Also, the impediments identified herein should be critically addressed. When this is done, police will be in a better position to carry out the expectations of the community, and in the process earn or get back the lost reputation, respect, recognition and co-operation they deserve as law enforcers of the new era.

The public perception of police is still very negative and much needs to be done to positively change the trend. Most of these negativities observed in the police formation by the public revolve around moral and social turpitudes: bribery and corruption, police brutality, dishonesty and criminal tendencies, improprieties and inadequacies, complicity and perversion of justice, etc. Generally, the Nigeria police have image problem, which makes members of the society to withdraw their trust, support and co-operation; disrespect them; cast aspersions on their competence and integrity; and dishonour their position as both bonafide fellow community members and certified law enforcers. The Nigeria police subsystem is characteristically militarised. Police brutality and their involvement in bribery and corruption have particularly earned them the worst reputation and notoriety. This development, coupled with widespread violation of the fundamental rights of citizens with impunity, has not permitted many Nigerians to imbibe the good spirit and moral conscience of forgiving the police.

Suggestions for Policy Implementation

In the light of our discussion so far, some suggestions are hereby made for policy implementation. The findings of this paper would hopefully be useful in fostering the activities of the Nigerian police, the operational and administrative issues, and the maintenance of peace and order in the society. The attitudes of the police should be geared towards moral rectitude and social justice to regain their reputation and esteem. This will pave way for robust, enduring police-public relations which will, in turn, guarantee laudable community policing. What is more, though to state the obvious, the endemic corruption and other unethical practices in the police institution is on the increase, thereby leading to inefficiency in the system and unco-operative attitudes from other important partners (community members) in community policing. These unhealthy police-public relations must be corrected or else effective community policing will remain unattainable. Who knows if it has eluded the memory of many police officers that they are public servants, and as such are expected to exhibit the attitude of a servant which is characterised by civility, gentility, humility, urbane, friendship, democratic, respectful, and, most importantly, policing the society according to the rule of law.

The police ignorance of the rule of law or their intentional abandonment of ethical standard required of a good public servant is rather a cheer criminal negligence. Thus, any attempt (whether polite or impolite) to correct these anomalies by the public, makes police to be brutal, abusive, unfriendly, trigger-happy, reckless, crime-collaborators or partners in crime, and selective in the application of rules and administration of justice. However, we must acknowledge the fact that sometimes it is incumbent upon the police to use 'coercion' (excessive force/reasonable force) in ensuring public compliance with the

law and order—but brutality and coercion are separate instruments that must be displayed or used at the appropriate circumstances—not on the regular basis as common in Nigeria. Coercion may be properly positioned to accomplish the police mission without recourse to human rights abuse or violation. For this reason, police officers need continuous training and retraining with state-of-the-art policing equipment to explore new frontiers and trends in both manual and scientific crime-fighting devices and techniques. They need to broaden their horizon and acquire additional skills to counter the artifice and antics of criminals, and acquaint themselves with the dynamics of intelligence, security, crime and law. No wonder Nnam *et al.* (2013) recommended that there is a dire need to overhaul the existing strategies for crime prevention and control in Nigeria, which placed much emphasis on law enforcement and order maintenance, to include intelligence, security, observance of the rule of law, restorative justice, and proactive community policing.

In a democratic State like Nigeria, the role of police in community policing cannot be overemphasized. They serve and protect the general public from harm, and help to preserve individuals' fundamental human rights at all cost. Moreover, the police are saddled with a contractual obligation to provide security to some public-political office holders; a responsibility that is often abused by both parties. Therefore, the paper suggests that services rendered by police officers to 'select few' (some political and public office holders) in society should be well defined and monitored to avoid mishap. The police should not be lured into hate politics or partisanship; that is, having vested interest in a particular political party and aspirants at the expense of others or against public interest. To guard against this, there is urgent need to properly screen and select the right police officers for 'political appointments' of any kind and their behaviour objectively monitored thereafter—as this will surely bring back their lost 'glory'—credit and recognition. Unguarded and indiscreet police-political appointments would not only portend danger to the members of the opposition parties but also bode ill to the society in its entirety. The situation would induce police to pay undue loyalty to the authorities that appoint them or the politicians they are serving. This state of affairs may invoke crime monopoly and organised crime syndicate within and outside the police organisation. And this is one of the major sources of public loss of trust and confidence in police agency and the former's outright refusal to co-operate with the latter in community policing—the fight against crime and criminals at the grassroots. The paper, therefore, suggests that a total overhauling, war against police graft in Nigeria and sincere adoption of professionalism will revise the Nigeria police battered image and lack of co-operation from community members.

As crime increases in the society, Nigeria should step up logistics and interventions to curtail the excesses of criminals in the country by establishing a vibrant and formalised community policing outfit. It is significant that the modus operandi of the police be constantly reviewed and upgraded to reflect such areas of international best practice as modernised patrol methods, sophisticated weaponry and equipment, sufficient and functional patrol vehicles, furtherance of specialised and technical education and regular on-the-job training with world-class research facilities, up-to-date criminal investigation-tailored Information Communication Technology (ICT) gadgets, cultured behaviour, civilised body language and language structures, and administrative procedures devoid of unnecessary bureaucracies.

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