

Re-thinking Community Policing as a Strategic Response to Criminality and Insecurity in Nigeria

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Abstract

Following the alarming public distrust of the Police and increasing twin challenges of criminality and insecurity in Nigeria, the former Inspector General of Police (IGP) Tafa Balogun with assistance from agencies in United States of America and United Kingdom, in 2003 undertook a number of measures to improve the police and citizen relationship. This culminated to the introduction of Community Policing in 2004 to address the gamut of security problems in the country. This study therefore x-rays Community Policing as a strategic response to criminality and insecurity in Nigeria. The study posits that given the inherent inadequacies of the Police coupled with negative public perception, it seems very difficult for the Nigerian Police Force to successfully tackle criminality and insecurity in the society without adequate supports from the members of the community. The paper is descriptive in nature and relies on secondary sources of data through relevant textbooks, journals, and other publications while the analysis is anchored on Functional theory. Arguably, the fear and incidence of criminality and insecurity could be holistically tackled through a comprehensive implementation and public embrace of the Community Policing strategy. This paper argues that some of the daunting challenges to the success of community policing includes inadequate qualified personnel, insufficient crime fighting equipment, poor remuneration of the security personnel, political interference amongst others. It is therefore recommended that Government at all levels in Nigeria should fully adopt Community Policing with all its principles to tackle criminality and insecurity. Efforts should be made to ensure recruitment of qualified personnel, efficient welfare packages for the personnel, adequate facilities for operations and effective communication between the Police and the Community members.

Key Words: Community Policing, Criminality, Crime reduction, Insecurity, Strategic response

Introduction

Globally, the Police as a government institution is saddled with the responsibilities of crime control in most societies. Such duties include crime detection and prevention, apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order as well as protection of lives and properties. The Police also ensure due enforcement of all laws and regulations in a country. In Nigeria, the Nigeria Police Force is directly playing such roles as may be required of them by law. Thus, the Nigeria Police Force has statutory powers to investigate crimes, apprehend offenders, interrogate suspects, prosecute suspects, and grant bail to suspects pending completion of investigation or prior to court arraignment, regulate or disperse unlawful processions and assemblies. The police are also empowered to search and seize properties suspected to be stolen or associated with crime, and to take and record for purposes of identification, the biometric of all suspected persons. In addition, the Police functions as the key institution for the control of vehicular traffic and prevention of societal vices.

Overtime the Nigerian police seem to have maintained a love-hate relationship with the civilians with an increasing breakdown of people's confidence and co-operation. Consequently, the role of ensuring security and containing criminality by the police is being questioned. It has been argued by various civilians that the Nigerian police have not lived up to their expectation in the performance of their duties of protecting and safe guarding lives and properties.

For instance, the high rate of criminality in Nigeria has raised a general feeling of insecurity of lives and property and seem to have dwarfed the efforts of police charged with the responsibility to control crimes in line with section 214 of the 1999, and of the 2011(as amended) constitution (Dambazau, 2007). This is evident in the increasing rate of armed robbery, burglary, banditry, kidnapping, rape, human trafficking, homicide, smuggling and terrorism. Such maladies tend to have over-stretched the capacity of the Police in ensuring public security in many societies. As such, the efforts of the government to provide efficient crime control to ensure the security of lives and properties of the populace appear to have been whittled down. This has prompted the residents across the country to cry out to both the federal and state governments for urgent assistance to curb the maladies.

The foregoing tends to suggest that it is no longer fashionable for government to unilaterally monopolize the business of security in any society. This probably has compelled the Federal Government of Nigeria to have subscribed to the pressure of extending the roles of crime control to the citizens. Thus, the search for a better option to tame the rising crime rate culminated to the emergence of the community policing approach in the country. This necessitates building a cordial relationship between the police and the public as an alternative strategic security policy framework for curbing insecurity and crime in the society (Karimu, 2015).

As noted by Wong, (2009, p.2) "community policing originated from the United States in the 1970s as a philosophy of policing to integrate the public into police institution,

not as police personnel but as collaborators in the security affairs of the nation for optimal efficiency and responsiveness”. In this regard, instead of leaving entirely the job of policing to the state and police, people are more than ever tasked to play a lot of complementary roles in the fight against insecurity and criminality in the society.

Community policing was first developed in the United States, in the early 1970s when findings revealed that individuals and neighborhood groups were capable of contributing to their own security (Dambazau, 2007). Since then, community policing seems to have become very effective in crime reduction and control in several countries including the US, Israel, UK, Canada, Japan amongst others (Onyeozili, 2008).

Following the alarming public distrust of the police, the former Inspector General of Police (IGP) Tafa Balogun with assistance from agencies in USA, in 2003 undertook a number of measures to improve the police and citizen relationship. In view of this, seven senior officers from Nigerian police in 2003 went to U.K and U.S.A respectively to do a comparative study of community policing (Ikuteyijo, 2009). At their return with promising reports, Community Policing was launched on the 27th day of April 2004 by the then Inspector-General of Police Tafa Balogun and Enugu State was used as the Pilot State (Ikuteyijo, 2009).

It should be noted that Nigeria Police Force before the advent of community policing operated on a traditional British semi-military structure of policing that stresses the centralization of powers. This principle of centralization of power is antithesis to the philosophy of community policing that emphasizes decentralization of power. The Tafa Balogun’s eight points agenda was hinged on the task of achieving massive onslaught against robbers, gruesome murder, assassination and other crimes of violence. This paved way for fast decisive crime and security management as well as community partnership in policing and robust public relations necessary for the vision of people’s police (Ibeanu, 2007).

Evidently, this makes community policing an imperative strategy to tame the tide of insecurity and criminality in Nigeria (Rasheed & Adamu, 2016). As a result, the former Inspector General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun borrowed a leaf from the United States and introduced Community Policing in 2004. After the successful pilot scheme at Enugu, six states including Benue, Enugu, Jigawa, Kano, Ondo, and Ogun were selected for the pilot scheme. By 2007, Lagos, FCT (Abuja), Cross River, Kaduna, Anambra, Edo, Bauchi, Kogi, Oyo, Imo, Katsina and Borno states joined the trend of community policing to ensure quality service delivery, community partnership and accountability in curbing insecurity and criminality (Dambazau, 2007). Since then, several other states have adopted the community policing strategy in tackling insecurity and criminality in their various states.

The foregoing suggests that Nigeria adopted Community Policing to address the twin challenges of crime and insecurity in the country. The essence is to complement the efforts of police and other security agencies in combating crime and restoring security of lives and property. The premium placed on Community Policing relies on the fact that it has far-reaching implications on curbing insecurity and reduction of criminality through active

participation of the citizenry. By getting the community involved, police will have more resources available for curbing insecurity and criminality in the society. Despite the introduction of Community Policing in Nigeria, insecurity and criminality has remained a daunting challenge in most parts of the country. It is in view of the above that this study is therefore set to x-ray how Community Policing could serve as a strategic response to insecurity and criminality in Nigeria.

Conceptualizing Community Policing, Criminality and Insecurity

Community policing is a philosophy and strategy that has focused on providing solutions to the problems of crime and social disorder, through effective community-based police services. The idea of Community policing differs from traditional policing which emphasizes strict police authority in curbing insecurity and crimes in the society. The approach places all members of the community as active allies in the effort to enhance the safety and quality of neighborhoods.

Specifically, the philosophy of community policing is for citizens and police to share responsibility for their community's security and safety. This provides a pedestal upon which the citizens and the police will work collaboratively to identify problems, propose solutions, implement action and evaluate the results in the community with regards to preventing and controlling criminality in the society.

Criminality entails state of being criminal or indulging in criminal activities or behaviors that do not conform to the norms of the society. As observed by Eze (2012) and Ehindero, (1998), criminality is a style of strategic behavior characterized by self-centeredness, indifference to the suffering and needs of others, and low self-control. This implies that more impulsive individuals are more likely to find criminality an attractive style of behavior because it can provide immediate gratification through relatively easy or simple strategies. However, such unwholesome strategies tend to be risky even though it requires little skill or planning; they culminate into pain for the victims.

From every indication, criminality has remained one of the major problems that tend to hamper the socio-economic development in Nigeria, (Odinkalu, 2005). There are several reports of criminal activities ranging from murder, forcible rape, aggravated assault, kidnapping, robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, armed banditry to arson. The menace of criminal gangs is on the increase and their deadly exploits in recent times have sent many homes wailing and gnashing, (Odinkalu, 2005). This has occasioned high level of insecurity of life and property and has constituted a deterrent to the willingness of both local and foreign investors to consider serious investment in the country. Also, Arase, (2018) pointed out that criminality has to do with any form of conduct that violates the criminal laws of a state, the federal government, or a local jurisdiction, for which there is no legally acceptable justification or excuse. The foregoing suggests that criminality connotes any act or omission

which portrays the person doing the act or making the omission liable to official punishment under any law.

Insecurity entails apprehension or tendencies of tension that could undermine internal cohesion and corporate existence of the nation and its ability to maintain its vital institutions for the promotion of its core values and socio-political objectives, as well as meet the legitimate aspirations of the people. It implies the presence or apprehension of danger to life and property, and the presence of a non-conducive atmosphere for the people to pursue their legitimate interests within the society (Okah, 2014). Put succinctly, insecurity has to do with the state and feeling of being unsafe and exposed to danger or threat to lives and property of a people in a particular geographical territory.

Insecurity manifest in several forms such as insurgency, ethnic/tribal clashes, kidnapping, armed banditry and molestation amongst others. In other words, insecurity is a state of fear or anxiety due to absence or lack of protection. In this regard, Nwanegbo and Odigbo, (2013) noted that insecurity is the state of being subject to danger or threat of danger, where danger is the condition of being susceptible to harm or injury.

Theoretical Framework-Functionalist theory

This study is anchored on functionalist theory also known as functionalism. The theory has its origins in the works of Emile Durkheim (1858-1917), who was especially interested in how social order is possible or how society remains relatively stable. The theory looks at society as a set of interrelated parts which together form a whole. Other significant contributors to the development of functionalist theory are Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (1881-1955), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), Ritzer (2011) among others. Functionalist theory is of the view that society is a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of balance and social equilibrium for the whole. It focuses on the macro-level of social structure, rather than the micro-level of everyday life.

Functionalism posits that society is more than the sum of its parts; rather, each aspect of it works for the stability of the whole. Durkheim envisioned society as an organism since each component plays a necessary role but cannot function alone. When one part experiences a crisis, others must adapt to fill the void in some way. Thus, the different parts of society are primarily composed of social institutions, each designed to fill different needs. Family, government, economy, media, education, and religion are important to understanding this theory and the core institutions that define sociology.

The underlining argument of functionalism is that an institution only exists because it serves a vital role in the functioning of society. Functionalism emphasizes the consensus and order that exist in society, focusing on social stability and shared public values (Ritzer, 2011). From this perspective, disorganization in the system, such as deviant behavior, leads to change because societal components must adjust to achieve stability. When one part of the system is dysfunctional, it affects all other parts and creates social problems, prompting social change. Durkheim was concerned with the question of how societies maintain internal stability and survive over time. He sought to explain social stability through the concept of solidarity, and differentiated between the mechanical and the organic solidarity in the societies (Ritzer 2011).

The functionalist theory emphasizes the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts. The functionalist theory is of the opinion that modern societies maintain the stability and internal cohesion through social order of security to ensure their continued existence over time. The functionalist theorists, posits that societies are thought to function like organisms, with various social institutions working together like organs to maintain and reproduce them. In this sense, Functionalist theory explains the paradox of insecurity and criminality in Nigeria and the prospects of community policing as a strategic response to the maladies.

The theory posits that the survival of the system depends on the compatibility of the various parts. Since the Nigeria Police is an integral part of the Nigeria social system, its ineffectiveness and poor job performance has implication on the overall security of the society. The inability of the police to perform their duties effectively has affected the overall

security of the nation because people feel very unsafe to go about their regular businesses. Thus, the need for collaboration between the police and the community in curbing insecurity and criminality cannot be over emphasized.

Therefore, the strength of this theory lies in its recognition that community policing can function effectively as a strategic response to curbing insecurity and criminality in Nigeria. The Police in conjunction with the community members can work more efficiently to contain criminal activities and insecurity in Nigeria. The operation of the security architecture of Nigeria will be at equilibrium leading to social order. Hence, functionalist theory is able to attribute the prevalence of security challenges in the state to the disequilibrium of social order, which could be ameliorated through community policing (Odeh & Umoh, 2015).

The utility of this theory as a framework of analysis in this study lies in its capacity to provide analytical lens regarding the workings of the various structures in the society like the police and the community.

Community policing is necessary to ensure that public peace is guaranteed through the maintenance of law and order. Hence, the functionalists believe that the police are friends of the public since they exist for the good of the people.

In this regard, Ibeanu, (2007) noted that community Policing was introduced to ensure transparency and accountability, curb crime and improve the public image and public relations of the police. However, despite its introduction, Community Policing seem to have failed to achieve the desired success in Nigeria as the public perception of the police appear to be worse than ever. The public still view the police as corrupt and people never to trust. The philosophy of community policing emphasizes partnership, decentralization of authority for proactive response to crimes. The structure of the Nigeria police is very central and their approach to crime fighting is still reactionary rather than proactive. The partnership between the public and police in crime fighting seem to have remained unrealistic because of the poor implementation of the community policing strategy and poor public perception of the police. More importantly, the Nigeria police force is built on the traditional culture of force which is used to brutalize the same people that they are expected to protect. This culture of brutality and use of force makes it difficult for the citizens to embrace community policing. Despite its analytical utility, the Functionalist theory has been criticized for downplaying the role of individual action, and for being unable to account for social change in contemporary society. Some critics claim that the perspective justifies the status quo and the process of cultural hegemony that maintains it.

The emergence and Structural formation of the Nigerian Police Force

The emergence and consequent establishment of Nigeria Police Force has its root from the tactical convergence of commercial, political and strategic interests of the Europeans who colonized the country. The first police institution was constituted in a 30-person Consular Guard under the authority of the then Governor of British West Africa in

October 1861 (Agekameh, 2018). Thereafter, the Constabulary for the colony of Lagos in 1879 was established with the appointment of the first commissioner of police in 1896. The Royal Niger Company established the Royal Niger constabulary in 1886 in Northern Nigeria.

Agekameh (2018) observed that in both the colony and the protectorates, the police institution was established to advance European colonial, commercial and strategic interests against those of the “natives”. The above aligns with the earlier assertion by Aremu, (2014) who pointed out that the key role of these police units was to put down organized expressions of “native” discontent; which resulted to the Epe uprising of 1863. Tamuno (1970) pointed out that the Nigeria police force had its origin in Lagos between 1845 and 1861.

Incidentally, by 1900, the Royal Niger constabulary was split into two units comprising a northern police force and regiment while allowing southern Nigeria Police Force to exist. When the protectorates of the Northern and Southern Nigeria were proclaimed in 1900, the Royal Niger Constabulary was split into the Northern Nigeria police force and the Northern Nigerian Regiment. In the south, the Lagos police force and part of the Niger Coast constabulary formed the southern Nigerian Regiment.

The new formations were responsible for dealing with internal disturbances and external aggression in addition to normal police duties. Thus, following the amalgamation in 1914, two different police formations were maintained for both Northern and southern Nigeria (Abdul, 2004). After the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates in 1914, the two police forces operated separately until April 1930 when they were merged to form the present Nigeria police force under the command of an Inspector General of Police.

Subsequently, the colonial government established the Nigeria Police with the appointment of an Inspector-General of Police on April 1, 1930, with its headquarters in Lagos. Aremu, (2014) argued that the core aim of establishing the Nigeria Police Force was to ensure full protection of the British, who held power and control of resources, and not really to “maintain peace and order” in the society.

The Nigeria police force therefore came into being by ordinance No. 3 of 1930. The newly created force was administered on a regional basis under the overall command of an Inspector General of Police with headquarters in Lagos. The police force also witnessed re-organization when the country adopted a federal constitution in 1954, when both the federal and regional government shared responsibility in the maintenance of law and order and the preservation of public safety. In 1964, the late Louis Edet was appointed the first indigenous Inspector-General of Police. Since then other Nigerian citizens have been at the helm of affairs in piloting the affairs of the Nigeria Police Force.

The above scenario seems to have laid the structural foundation for the existence of the Nigeria Police Force. Thus, Alemika and Chukwuma (2005); Kupolati, T. (2007) and

Nnam, Agboti&Otu, (2013) have separately observed that the colonial legacy of repressive policing has been responsible for the prevailing alienation of the police from the people resulting to widespread deficits in terms of legitimacy. Also, Nwanze (1994) x-rayed the coercive activities of the colonial government which needed a brutal force to deal with the restive natives in order to facilitate the colonization of the country.

In this regard, Odinkalu, (2005) noted that the contemporary Nigeria Police Force have focused more on securing the ruling class and wealthy members of the society. This is very similar to the way the colonial police catered for the interest of the colonial government and its European personnel. By virtue of Section 4, Police Act of 1967, Cap 359 of the Laws of the Federation, 1990, power is conferred upon the Force for the maintenance of law and order throughout the Country. The Nigeria Police personnel with an estimated 377,000 employees have a centralized management command and control structure in which the Inspector-General of Police singlehandedly determines both policy and operational matters. As the head of the Force, the Inspector-General of Police is appointed by the President but on the advice of the Nigeria Police Service Commission from among some serving top hierarchy of the Force (Arase, 2018).

According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2005) the Force is organized into 37 Commands and the Force Headquarters. Each of the 36 States and the Federal Capital Territory is served by a Command of the Force. The Force Headquarters is the office of the Inspector General of Police. The tasks of the Force are carried out through six Departments which include: Administration and Finance, Operations, Works and Logistics, General investigation and Intelligence, Training, Research and Planning.

Each of the Departments is under the leadership of Deputy Inspectors-General of Police. The 36 State Police Commands and the FCT are further organized into twelve Zonal Commands. The Zonal commands are under the command of Assistant Inspectors-General, while Commissioners of Police are in charge of State Commands. The entire Force is under the command of the Inspector -General of Police. The Commandants of the Police Staff College, Jos and Police Academy Wudil, Kano are also Assistant Inspectors-General of Police, while the Police Colleges are commanded by Commissioners of Police, and the Police Training Schools where recruits are trained are under the direction of Superintendents of Police.

Structurally, there tends to be tension between the centralized structure and operational demands of the Nigeria Police Force particularly at State governments level. Some states have created special security outfits that seem not work to full effectiveness with the Nigeria Police. This trajectory obscures the options for enhanced accountability, such as regularization of the Police Council provided for in the constitution, which offers State and Federal Governments a joint forum for oversight.

The centralized nature of the force, while allowing for easier inter-state co-operation than in decentralized police systems, tends also to filter human and material resources towards the centre, while many frontline units are underequipped. Decision-making concentrated at the central level can also be restrictive in some contexts. The sole broad-based oversight organ is the Police Service Commission, with powers restricted to recruitment, promotion and dismissal, concentrating mainly on senior officers.

With regards to the powers and functions, the members of the Nigeria Police Force are men and women organized by the state as a paramilitary force with the sole purpose of defending the state. They enforce laws, values and ideologies that justifies, legitimizes, and defend prevailing distribution of power and wealth in the society (Alemika and Chukwuma 2005; Akuul, 2011).

However, for effective national policing and operational command, the zonal command structure was created. The country is divided into twelve zones. Similarly, the State Commands are divided into a number of Police Areas and Divisions under the command of Assistant Commissioner of Police who oversees Police Stations and Police Posts within his Area or Division.

Fundamental Propellers of Criminality and Insecurity in Nigeria

There are indications that the fear of insecurity in Nigeria is on the increase and this has been compounded by the rising waves of terrorism since the country returned to democratic rule in 1999. Insecurity and criminality has a root and history in Nigeria, and could be traced back to the period from 1960 to 1970. At independence in 1960 a federal structure was imposed on Nigeria by the British.

These challenges can be traced to the early years of military rule when large quantities of arms were imported into the country for the use of the military during and after the Nigerian civil war, some of which got into the hand of the civilians. Soon after the civil war these arms were used by civilians and ex-military men for mischievous purposes such as armed robbery. There was also the army of unemployed youths some of whom lost their job during the civil war. The level of insecurity and criminality assumed dangerous dimensions in the prolonged years of military rule beginning from 1970 during which people procure arms and light weapons for personal defense (Jega, 2002). Some of these arms and light weapons illegally got into the hands of unemployed youths who used them for deviant purposes (Okorie, 2011). Several causes of criminality and insecurity in Nigeria that are inimical to socio-economic development and national integration have been highlighted by Ali, (2013) and Onyishi, (2011). According to these scholars, the following tend to have constituted the propellers of criminality and insecurity in Nigeria:

Endemic Poverty Orchestrated by Pervasive Material Inequalities and Unfairness:

The scourging poverty resulting to material inequalities inherent in the society has remained a facilitator of insecurity and criminality. This is because unemployment and hunger among the youths are the root causes of insecurity and criminal activities. Such trajectory has been linked to the failure of successive administrations to address challenges of poverty, unemployment, and inequitable distribution of wealth among the citizens of the country.

Economic and Political Corruption: Economic and Political Corruption has remained twin hydra-headed monster that has contributed to government failure to ensure security of lives and properties in Nigeria. Nwanegbo and Odigbo, (2013) noted that corruption deeply threatens the fabric of the Nigeria society as it hampers economic growth and development.

Ethno-religious Clashes: Ethno-religious conflict in Nigeria has resulted to lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear, and a tendency towards violent confrontation (Salawu, 2010). Ethno-religious clashes are a major security challenge that confronts Nigeria. Ethno-religious violence is also traceable to the inability of Nigerian leaders to tackle development challenges and distribute state resources equitably. Other causes are accusation, and allegation of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry. In all parts of Nigeria, ethno-religious conflicts have

assumed alarming rates. It has occurred in places like Shagamu (Ogun State), Lagos, Abia, Kano, Bauchi, Nassarawa, Jos, Taraba, Ebonyi and Enugu State respectively. These ethno-religious identities have become disintegrative and destructive social elements threatening the peace, stability and security in Nigeria (Eme and Onyishi, 2011).

Weak Security System: This is a major contributory factor to the level of insecurity in Nigeria, and this can be attributed to a number of factors which include inadequate funding of the police and other security agencies, lack of modern equipments both in weaponry and training, poor welfare of security personnel, and inadequate personnel. The Nigeria Police Force has been overwhelmed with enormous challenges which have been inhibiting its capacity to provide security for lives and properties and effectively combat the rising insecurity in the North, thereby making it easy for the insurgents, bandits, herdsmen and kidnapers to have a field day. Mohammed Adamu, a former Inspector General of Police noted that with shortage of funds, inadequate equipments and personnel, there is little or nothing the police can do to curb the rising wave of insecurity in the country.

Terrorism and Porous Borders: Terrorism is a global phenomenon and it is ravaging the whole world. Terrorism in Nigeria has been linked to religious, socio-political, economic and cultural factors. Even though terrorism originated from Islamic fanaticism, it is now driven by factors such as inequalities within the country and lack among Nigerians, in terms of livelihood (economic) resources, education or access to education and good values. The current challenge of terrorism to physical security is threatening the Nigerian society on all fronts. Some foreign observers have linked terrorism in Nigeria to a number of factors which include, political conflicts, unbalanced development that involves horizontal inequalities, religious/ethnic distrust, poor governance linked to leadership failure, and high-level corruption (Kufour, 2012; Oluwarotimi, 2012). The porous frontiers of the country, where individual movements are largely untracked have contributed to the level of insecurity in Nigeria. As a result of the porous borders there is an unchecked inflow of Small Arms and Light Weapons into the country which has aided militancy and criminality in Nigeria (Hazen and Horner, 2007).

Electoral Violence: Nigeria has a long history of politically based violence since the collapse of the first republic on January 15 1966, and the incursion of the military into governance that same date. The electoral politics in Nigeria right from 1960s till date have been characterized with violent conflicts, political thuggery, assassinations, and arson. Politicians in Nigerian do not accommodate dialogue, negotiation and consensus (Eme and Onyishi, 2011). Political contests are characterized by desperation, and violent struggle for political power among politicians. Recurring political violence in Nigeria could be attributed to over-zealousness and desperation of political gladiators to win elections or remain in office at all cost. These misadventures have often been catastrophic leading to decimation of innocent lives, disruption of economic activities, and the destruction of properties among others.

The former IGP who was drilled for two and half hours on the security situation, told the lawmakers at a closed session that the major problems confronting the police force were shortage of funds, men and materials required to carry out the job. According him, if these are available, insecurity would be nipped in the bud (Ajayi, Erunke &Umoru, 2019). More dangerously, with the present numerical strength of the Nigeria police put at 334,000, they can hardly secure lives and properties in the North that consists of 54.5% of Nigeria's entire population which is over 190 million people.

Community Policing as a Strategic Response to Criminality and Insecurity in Nigeria

Nigeria as a heterogeneous society appears overwhelmed by the insecurity and criminality across states of the country following the upsurge in killings and devastations. The challenge of curbing insecurity and criminality in Nigeria has remained a daunting challenge. Scholars such as Nwolise, (2004), Okunola, (2002); Okah, (2014); Dambazau (2007) have separately observed that there have been several efforts by government at tackling insecurity and criminality in Nigeria.

The police, who are the primary custodians of security in the country, seemed overstretched prompting some desperate measures to tackle insecurity in the land. Some of the observable factors responsible for poor police performance include lack of decentralization, insufficient funding and corruption. This seems to have accounted for increasing crime wave and surging insecurity across the country. Different security outfits are springing up along ethnic and regional lines, a clear testimony that the central security forces have either failed or compromised. For instance, the decision of South West governors, state legislators and key stakeholders in the region to institutionalize a South West Security Network code named 'Amotekun' to respond to insecurity and criminality is a clear testament to the above position.

Similarly, in the South East, the governors and stakeholders are said to be working out strategies for a regional security arrangement while the states in the region have adopted ad hoc measures to tackle insecurity and crimes in their region. Also, the North Central states are in serious consultations to create a security arrangement to help secure their citizens against the mayhem of suspected herdsmen and bandits. These security threats and the diverse responses to them may have prompted some lawmakers in the National Assembly to enact laws that will create a synergy between the police and host communities in the country to tackle insecurity and criminality.

This scenario tends to have necessitated numerous reforms. Community Policing is one of such reforms. Siegel (2005) has noted that in recent years, police departments have experimented with new forms of law enforcement, including community policing. Rather

than respond to crime, police officers have taken on the role of community change agents, working with the citizens to prevent crimes before they occur (Arinze, 2010; Onyeozili, 2005). Thus, Community policing has been seen as a promising strategy capable of tackling the twin challenges of insecurity and criminality in Nigeria as is obtainable in USA, Canada and United Kingdom amongst others.

The roles and responsibilities of the police in any society cannot be over emphasized. They are charged with the responsibility of prevention and detection of crime, apprehension of offenders, protection of lives and properties, due enforcement of laws and regulation with which they are charged with the performance of military duties within or outside Nigeria as may be required by or under authority. Other roles required of them includes: The control of traffic and conduct of prosecution before any court in the country, as well as being empowered to exercise state power if necessary through coercion and violence (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2005).

There are indications that the seemingly dismal performance of the Nigeria Police appears to account for the noncooperation by the public who are often reluctant to volunteer useful information to the police. Nevertheless, the responsibilities of crime prevention and detection as well as prosecution of offenders cannot be successfully performed without the cooperation of the public. This suggests that Community Policing remains a critical strategy towards addressing the challenges of crime control in Nigeria.

This indicates that policing has remained very critical for ensuring order, safety and preserving social relations in most societies. It involves securing compliance with existing laws and conformity with precepts of social order as enshrined in the constitution of the country. In this regard, Alemika & Chukwuma, (2005) stated that the necessity of policing becomes even more evident in modern societies characterized by diversities and contradictions due to population heterogeneity, urbanization, industrialization and conflicting ideologies on appropriate socio-political and economic form of organization.

Scholars such as Rasheed & Adamu, (2016); Dambazau, (2007); Arase & Iwuofor, (2007); Ibeanu, (2007) amongst others have argued that Community policing has been very effective in crime reduction and control in several countries including the US, Israel, UK, Canada, Japan amongst others. More specifically, Dambazau, (2007) noted that the overall essence of Community policing lies with collaboration between the police and the community that identifies and solves community problems.

The implementation of community policing goes a long way in changing the characteristics outlooks of the police. It is a renewed emphasis on crime prevention and control rather than law enforcement and can go hand in hand with the integration of policing with the community. The essence of community policing is to provide environment where safety and security are participatory in nature involving absolutely everyone living in the community (Okere, 2019). It is a philosophy, a belief that working together, the police, the

government and community can accomplish what neither can accomplish alone. The synergy that results from community policing can be powerful.

As a strategy for curbing insecurity and criminality, community policing has been noted to serve as a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to address crime, social disorder, and fear in a society. For Johnson, (2005) community policing entails bringing police and citizens together to prevent crime and solve the problem of criminality in the society. Community policing revolves around collaboration between police and community members characterized by problem-solving partnerships to enhance public safety. Community policing was adopted widely among law enforcement agencies in the 1990s. The essence is to improve trust between community members and the police, and leveraging police resources through voluntary assistance by community members in public safety measures (Odeh, & Umoh (2015).

Furthermore, Abiri (2011) observed that community policing is adopted to build a transparent, fair, neutral, accountable and responsive police organization with more effective strategies beyond the traditional method of policing which is exclusively based on law enforcement and tends to be reactive. Coquilhat, (2008) argues that community policing emerged in response to the use of technology and application of scientific management to policing.

Apparently, community policing is founded on the principle that in a democratic society, the police are entrusted by their fellow citizens to protect the public's fundamental human rights to liberty, equality and justice under the law. This concept is characterized by the "Police service" rather than the "police force", where the most significant benchmarks of performance are public satisfaction, trust and confidence.

The major keys to putting community policing into action are, communication, operation, coordination collaboration and change (Okah, 2014). Nnam, Agboti&Otu, (2013) observed that 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. Thus, community policing entails a systematic involvement and inclusion of credible local guards, vigilance groups, able-bodied civilian youths, traditional rulers and chiefs into the conventional police subsystem for success in crime control at the grassroots (Nnam, Agboti and Ote, 2013)

The above indicates why the global community is transiting from traditional form of policing to a systematic community policing (Okiro, 2007). This paradigm shift from the traditional police system to community-participatory system 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 is to involve the community in the protection of the citizenry and improvement of police-community relationships for effective policing of society (Ren, Cao, Lovrich, & Gaffney, 2005).

Basically, strategies of community policing manifest in community partnerships, organizational transformation, and problem-solving tend to increase trust in police (Chene, 2012). Evidently, Policing agencies are unlikely to be successful in creating partnerships to address violent crimes until they establish trusting relationships with the communities they serve (Chene, 2012). Community policing seeks to focus on constructive engagement with people who are the end users of the police service and re-negotiate the contract between the people and the police thereby making the community co-producers of justice and a quality police service (Okeshola & Mudiare, 2013; Kupoluyi, & Nwogwugwu, 2015).

An obvious prospect of community policing, according to Coquilhat (2008) is that, it offers the public a larger window into police activity and provides opportunities for 'grass roots' support. With the many challenges and constraints facing the Nigerian Police Force which have adversely affected police image and police-community relations, the need to reconnect the police with the people they serve necessitated the introduction of community policing strategy as a cardinal initiative in the evolving agenda of police reform since the transition to democracy (Abiri, 2011).

There can be no security without the police being decentralized with the local and state governments having their own police (Okere, 2019). This is anchored on the fact that the core benefit of community policing is a more localized personnel base, which will naturally involve more pressure for the welfare of the officers within a state, as they would be indigenes of their duty posts (Agekameh, 2018). The knowledge of the local community is needed for effective policing. It is only logical that to fight crime in the same locality, we need law enforcement personnel familiar with the terrain.

Thus, community policing has two major components: (i) community partnerships, and (ii) problem solving (Kupoluyi, & Nwogwugwu, 2015). In order to adopt a community policing approach, a police department must create its own community policing style, which reflects the needs of the citizens in the communities that it serves. Normandeau & Leighton (1990) have identified the following characteristics as essential for the success of any community policing effort:

- The mission of police officers as peace officers
- Community consultation
- A proactive approach to policing
- A problem-oriented strategy
- Crime prevention activities
- Interagency cooperation



- Interactive policing
- A reduction of the fear of victimization
- Development of police officers as generalists
- Decentralized police management
- Development of flatter organizational structures and accountability to the community.

In short, adoption of the philosophy of community policing involves a radical change in *all elements* of organizational structure and process. The employment of a multi-agency approach stresses the use of community-level resources, a sharing of knowledge and a pooling of resources and expertise in a cost-effective manner. These elements are all facilitated by a complete adoption of community policing philosophy. Thus, the degree to which a police agency adopts community policing is likely to have a profound influence on its use of informal means to handle youth crime. Since community policing focuses on the needs of a specific community, there is no blanket schematic approach. An approach that works in one jurisdiction may not be applicable in another.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Following the analysis above, this paper argues that Community policing can be used to actively and proactively address the root causes of insecurity and criminality in any society. Community policing hinges on the efforts to produce the most creative efficient and effective approach to seeking closer communication and partnering with diverse citizens and groups to control crime, reduce fear, solve community problems and improve the quality of life. This suggests that Community policing is a strategy aimed at achieving more effective and efficient way of curbing insecurity and criminality in the society. crime control and legitimacy. This is because a proactive reliance on community resources makes it easier to address insecurity and criminality because a greater number of the public share in decision-making concerning their security, safety and general public welfare. Community Policing is very proactive in dealing with security issues and threats, through modern methods of intelligence gathering, and intelligence sharing, training, logistics, motivation, and deploying advanced technology in managing security challenges.

However, in Nigeria, Community policing seem to be 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. Furthermore, the police organization 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.

It is therefore recommended that all stakeholders should embrace community policing as a panacea to tackling insecurity and criminality in Nigeria. The citizens should be incorporated in to the act of policing their societies because no crime will ever take place without internal collaborators. Therefore, there is need to enhance the capacity of the Nigeria Police Force through improved funding, training and provision of necessary logistics. In this manner, community policing would serve as a strategic response to criminality and insecurity in Nigeria.

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