Policing the Community or Community Policing: Implication for Community Development in Nigeria

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Abstract
Community policing is fast becoming a global trend, especially in the 21st century. But community policing is neither foreign nor new to Africa, because long before European colonialism in Africa, the traditional African political societies had been policing and securing themselves. The European colonialism supplanted African model of community policing with colonial police who alienated the people. This alienation continued in post-colonial Nigeria deepening the distrust or mistrust between the people and the police. Rather than community policing, the Nigerian police has been busy policing the community thereby alienating the people more. This lack of cooperation from the people has a serious consequence, which is the inability of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) to combat crime and tackle various security challenges in Nigeria leading to the proliferation of vigilante security architecture particularly in the form of vigilante militia groups. But this proliferation has only exacerbated security challenges in Nigeria owing to the distrust between them and the police. So far, community policing as implemented in Nigeria has not ensured security and safety in Nigeria not to talk of facilitating community development. Thus, insecurity, crimes and disorder have hindered development in the communities. The paper concluded that so long as the Nigerian Police engages in policing the community instead of partnering with the community in matters of security, safety and development in the communities will continue to elude Nigeria. This study is essentially qualitative, descriptive, and prescriptive.
Keywords: Community policing, community development, rural development, security, Nigeria

Introduction

Community policing is fast becoming a global trend, especially in the 21st century. But the key elements or core component of community policing is not foreign or new in Africa, for example, the pre-colonial Igbo society did not distinguish between policing or fighting crime with the overall role of the society. Consequently, the role of policing in the traditional Igbo society was diffused in that there was no specialised institution which specific role or primary purpose was to police or fight crime. It was the role of the entire society, thus, the saying that "elders do not allow goat to be strangulated by the forest". Yet the age grade and masquerade society were prominent in the role of policing and the task of policing and fighting crime among other roles or functions, and all adult male citizens belong to both the age grade and masquerade society meaning that the task of policing is that of the entire society (Aniche, 2018).

But the advent of European colonialism changed everything, as the colonial police alienated themselves from the people which continued in the post-colonial or post-independence Nigeria. The consequence of this alienation is serious security challenges in Nigeria resulting to proliferation of vigilante security apparatus. By 2003, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) sent some policemen to Britain to be trained in community policing with the hope of adapting it to the Nigerian context. But the poor human development indices (HDI) in Nigeria are likely to pose serious challenges to the prospects of community policing with serious implication for community development in Nigeria. We divide this chapter into seven main parts beginning with the introduction; defining community development, community policing, vigilante and neighbourhood watch; examine the nexus between Nigerian police and the emergence of vigilante security apparatus in Nigeria as well as community policing and development in Nigeria; and finally, conclude the chapter.

Defining Community Development

Community constitutes rural and urban areas, while the former is the rustic, agrarian countryside usually associated with relatively lower population, lower income, homogeneity and agricultural economy, the latter is characterised by relatively higher population density, higher income, heterogeneity and industrial economy associated with cities and towns. In other words, the two main sectors of community are the rural and urban sectors (Ezeani and Elekwa, 2001).

Thus, according to Umebau (2008, p. 75) community refers to "a social group occupying a defined geographical area and whose members share common interests… historical background, cultural values, economic activities as well as basic social institutions". In the same vein, Wilkins (1976, p. 41) defines

community as "the actual population which occupies a given area bound to each other by a shared system of rules and regulations, which control their relationships with each other". They form a group of people who meet frequently or regularly face-to-face. Similarly, Igbo and Anugwom (2001, p. 20) defines community as a "population which occupies a given area and shares similar system of rules and regulations controlling relationship with each other". Community promotes regular, close and intense interactions among members or residents.

Thus, from the foregoing it means that community development constitutes rural and urban development. Battern (1962, p. 1) in Umebau (2008, p. 63) aptly argued that there is no precise and generally accepted definition of community development. He rather opines that community development is "any action taken by any agency and primarily designed to benefit the community". Desautot (1958, p. 2) also in Umebau (2008, p. 63), in line with this view, sees community development as "a movement designed to promote better living for the whole community or town with the active participation on the initiative of the community". The United Nations Economic and Social Council defines community development generally as "a process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities into the life of the nation and enable them contribute fully in national progress".

For the purpose of this chapter, we simply define community development as the improvement of the living standard and quality of life of the people living or residing in the community through increasing provision of social services such as social amenities and infrastructures like roads, electricity, pipe-borne water, security, industries, etc. Really, community development facilitates improved conditions of life as well as eradicates poverty and reduces unemployment in both rural and urban. Security is therefore crucial to the community and constitutes one of the important social services provided through community development. In other words, it requires the cooperation of the government and the community. Communities cannot handle matters of security alone. It requires the cooperation of the security agents like the police. Conversely, the police cannot ensure security or tackle crime alone. It requires partnering with the community.

Security is very essential to community development because both life and property have to be safeguarded for development to occur. No development, not even community development for that matter can take place where there are no peace, law and order. Security does not only facilitate development, it is one of the indispensable features or ingredients of development that is to say that it is co-extensive with development. Community policing is a desideratum and sine qua non for community development in Nigeria.

Understanding Community Policing
Community policing or neighbourhood policing or proximity policing has been variously defined, but they are all mainly different ways of saying the same thing. For example, Ikuteyijo and Rotimi (2012) write that community policing entails community partnership in creating a safe and secure environment for all in which people take active part in their own affairs. In the same vein, Stipak (1994) conceived community policing as a management strategy that promotes the joint responsibility of citizens and the police for community safety, through working partnerships and interpersonal contact.

Similarly, Rooyen (2001) regarded community policing as a philosophy and strategy which is based on a partnership between the community and the police to find creative solutions for contemporary community problems, crime and other related matters. According to SAPS Police, community policing is a philosophy that guides police community partnerships and a problem-solving approach responsive to the needs of the community (Reyneke, 1997). For Masrofski, Worden and Snipes (1995) community policing means making the police more cooperative with those who are not police. Whilst for Adams (1994) community policing refers to a shift from a military inspired approach to fighting crime to one that relies on forming partnership with constituents.

Consequently, community policing has become a term used by both professionals and scholars alike to replace other terms such as foot patrol, crime prevention, problem-oriented policing, community-oriented policing, police-community relations and more. Therefore, community policing is a policing strategy or philosophy based on the notion that community interaction and support can help control crime and reduce fear, with community members helping to identify suspects, detain vandals and bring problems to the attention of police (Friedmann, 1996).

In other words, community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem solving techniques, which proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder and fear of crime. Perhaps, the inference that can be distilled from these definitions is that community policing, unlike the authoritarian and autocratic character and top-down approach of traditional policing, is democratic, participatory and consultative, and bottom-top in approach which is why it is referred to as democracy in action (Aniche, 2018).

However, no matter how community policing is defined, it represents a paradigm shift away from traditional policing or traditional model of policing. The central theme is the collaboration of efforts between the

police and the residence in combating crime and fear of crime. Community policing does not imply that the police are no longer in authority or that the primary duty of preserving law and order is subordinated, rather community policing entails community partnership in creating a safe and secure environment for all (Ikuteyijo and Rotimi, 2012).

From the foregoing, the basic elements or core components of community policing include community partnerships, organisational transformation and problem solving. Community partnership is collaborative if partnerships between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organisation they serve, develop solutions to problems and increase trust in police. It involves confidence building measures and capacity building in which the partnerships are forged in conjunction with the other government agencies, community members and groups, human and social service providers, private businesses, and the media. This may involve establishment of ad hoc community liaison, where a community police officers goes out into the community and tries to find responsive people who are on the side of the police to serve as police informants. Thus, through community partnership, community policing seeks to recontextualise the police, that is to say, community policing involves efforts to better link police and community (Greene, 2000; Bayley, 2012).

In this regard, Bayley (2012) noted that some forces require community police officers to handle calls for police, many do not. Almost all community police officers are responsible for community crime prevention one way or the other. Some do foot patrolling, many do not. Some are given responsibility for diagnosing the needs of communities and coming up with solutions, utilising police and non-police resources. Others are simply responsible for delivering traditional police services but are enjoined to do so in a more responsive and community-oriented way.

Also, Greene (2000) stated that community policing has increased the police forms to include issues such as public safety, crime prevention, fear of crime and community quality of life. Thus, communities are seen as participants in shaping police objectives and interventions as well as evaluating them. Capacity building in community policing or community-police partnership is focused on crime prevention and victim assistance. The police strengthens citizens' capacity and resolve to resist crime and recover from it. Therefore, effective community policing depends on optimising positive contact between patrol officer and community members. Police departments may supplement automobile patrols with foot, bicycle, scooter and horseback as well as adding "mini-stations" to bring police closer to the community. Regular community meetings and to afford police and the community members opportunity to air concerns or views and find ways to address them. Officers working long-term assignments on the same shift and beat will become aware of the day-to-day or daily workings of the community. There is need for increased police pressure in the community in order to reduce fear of crime among the community members thereby creating a sense of neighbourhood security. Fear must be reduced if community members are to participate actively in policing, because people will not aid if they feel that their actions will jeopardise their safety.

More importantly, people will not partner with the police if they suspect that the police will reveal their identity to the criminal gangs. Police recognize the need for cooperation with the community if they must deserve community supports when encouraging community members to come forth with relevant information. Police should realize that trust will enable them to gain greater access to valuable information from the community that could lead to the solution and prevention of crime, engender support for needed crime-control measures, and provide an opportunity for the police officers to establish a working relationship with the community.

The next core component of community policing is organisational transformation which involves transforming or fundamentally changing the organisational culture, leadership and management structure, labour relations, strategic planning processes, performance evaluation technique and operational transparency or modus operandi, the geographic assignment of officers, the allotment of fiscal resources, recruitment and hiring practices, training and information gathering systems. This is to create an organisation infrastructure that can best support proactive operation intended to prevent crime (Aniche, 2018).

In line with this, Bayley (2012) writes that in some forces, community policing is a new command often based in headquarters, a new unit of specialisation within the police while in others, it is function that is integrated into the existing command structure, though rarer than the former. Therefore, in terms of personnel, that is, recruitment and training, the major choice is whether community policing is carried out by new specialists or by traditional police workers. Community policing personnel may be located at headquarters, in police stations or in disbursed offices created, often with material or financial contributions from communities. In the case of volunteers, the question is whether community policing is strictly performed by the police themselves, or the whether the community is to be enlisted, especially in the form of volunteers, to work with the police.

Finally, the next core component of community policing, that is, problem-solving is the process of engaging in the proactive and systematic examination of identifying problems to develop and rigorously evaluate effective responses. Community model of policing requires police to become proficient in what is known as the SARA

model of problem solving which includes scanning, analysis, response and assessment. Scanning (S) involves identifying and prioritising problems. Analysis (A) involves researching what is known about the problem or subjecting the identified problem into thorough investigation. Response (R) entails developing solutions to bring about lasting reductions in the number and extent of problems. Lastly, assessment (A) involves evaluating or appraising the success of the responses. Whilst, traditional law enforcement practice, that is, traditional model of policing are reactive and emphasise measures such as response times, arrest rates, etc.; community policing encourages police to proactively solve community problems and address the factors that contribute to crime rather than how police respond to crime (Aniche, 2018).

Problem-solving in community policing is problem specific and focus. The main thrust is to make the police more thoughtful about the problems they address and their methods of intervention. It makes the police to be more analytic. Problem-solving is based on the assumption that crime and disorder can be reduced in small geographic areas by carefully study the characteristic of problem in the area and then applying the appropriate resources. Community participation in identifying and setting priorities will contribute to effective problem-solving efforts by the community and the police. Cooperative problem-solving also reinforces trust, facilitates the exchange of information, and leads to the identification of other area that could benefit from the mutual attention of the police and the community (Greene, 2000).

Ferreira (1996) identifies three major models of community policing, viz, crime prevention and peace preservation policing, communications policing, and community building policing. Crime prevention and peace preservation model entails securing the active cooperation and participation of the community in order to prevent crimes and preserve peace in the community. In other words, the model focuses on crime prevention and peace preservation through securing active cooperation, supports and participation of the community. This model also includes the involvement of the community in monitoring and controlling police activities.

Communications policing sees the police as agents of consensus by making communities cooperative and bearers of a sense of traditional which could be achieved through intervention with the community members as well as vertical or two-way flow of information so that they can provide for their own security and take necessary precautions. This model is best describes as the policing of communications in ensuring information flow about risk, safety and security of the community. It is all about establishing channels of communication between the police and the community (Ferreira, 1996).

Community building policing emphasises capacity building by the police in the communities, that is, the police must help to build communities and take social as opposed to legal action. To build capacity, the police needs to penetrate the community in all its aspects and develop personal relationships at beat level. The police must view their role in neighbourhood as a means of re-establishing the neighbouring relationships and strengthening the institutions that makes a community competent and able to deal with its problems (Ferreira, 1996).

Vigilante and Neighbourhood Watch Clarified
Although, some vigilante security outfits may have started as neighbourhood watch, but they are not exactly the same. Vigilante and neighbourhood watch are both private security organisations primarily made up of volunteers but that is as far as the similarity goes. Vigilante is a private individual who legally or illegally punishes an alleged law breaker, or participates in a group, which metes out extra-legal or extra-judicial punishment to an alleged lawbreaker. Following from this definition, vigilant group therefore metes out extra-legal or extra-judicial punishment to an alleged lawbreaker. However, not all vigilant activities are illegal, because sometimes vigilante began by apprehending or catching criminals and hand them over to the police (Aniche, 2018).

Vigilante justice is spurred on by the idea that criminal punishment is either non-existent or insufficient for the crime, usually based on the perception that the government is ineffective in enforcing the law and this need community members to volunteer to protect the community. In other instances, a person may choose a role of vigilante as a result of personal experience as opposed to social demand. Persons seen as "escaping from the law" or "above the law" are sometimes the targets of vigilantism. It may target persons or organisations involved in illegal activities in general or it may be aimed against a specific group or type of activity, for example, police corruption. Vigilante behaviour may differ in degree of violence, and in some cases vigilantes may assault targets verbally, physically attack them or vandalise their property. Any person who defies the law to further justice is a vigilante, and thus, violence is not a necessary criterion (Aniche, 2018).

Neighbourhood watch, on the other hand, is an organised group of citizens devoted to crime and vandalism prevention within a neighbourhood. Therefore, members of neighbourhood watch and others who use legal means of bringing people to justice are not considered vigilantes. In other words, neighbourhood crime watch is not vigilante security apparatus, because when suspecting criminal activities, members of neighbourhood watch or crime watch are encouraged to contact authorities or police and not to intervene. Neighbourhood watches, therefore, are police informants in that they give police relevant information that helps the police in their

investigations and crime preventions (Aniche, 2018).

In Nigeria, ethnic militias or militant groups have been erroneously taken to be vigilante groups. Although, some ethnic militias are involved in vigilante service, they are not strictly speaking vigilante security apparatus in that they are engaged in other activities which are not necessarily or primarily vigilante service. The point is that vigilante activities are not the primary activities or roles of the ethnic militant groups like Odua People's Congress (OPC), Movement for Actualisation of Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), etc. It so happened that along the line, these radical ethnic organisations began to assume or usurp the responsibilities of vigilante security. The traditional concept of vigilante in Nigeria, however, exclusively refers to an un-armed voluntary citizens or groups created in local communities to help the security agents by arresting suspected criminals or delinquents and handing them over to the police.

The Nigerian Police and the Emergence of Vigilante Security Architecture in Nigeria
Prior to the advent of the Nigeria Police Force in 1889 by the British colonial administration, there were various groups performing the role of policing the communities in what is today known as Nigeria. In some cases like Igbo pre-colonial societies, the role of policing or protecting lives and property of the people was the responsibility of the entire community even though it was facilitated by the age grade and masquerade societies. It was this model of community policing that colonial police supplanted with the colonial police in 1889 to provide quasi-military assistance to the British colonial administration in Nigeria. According to Tamuno (1970):

By far the most crucial factor in understanding the existence in Nigeria of semi-military police lay in the nature of Nigerian opposition to British jurisdiction and rule… These sources of friction… emphasised the need for troops and police as ready instrument of enforcing government orders when peaceful overtures failed… In the circumstances, the police formed the frontline of the defence in Britain's attempts to maintain law and order… both soldiers and the police, the distinction was meaningless.

Similarly, Garba (2012) noted that the idea of the modern Nigerian police is a creation of colonial rule in which its history and function began in serving the interest of the British colonial rule. It was organised as a quasi-military squad by the colonial government as an instrument of riot control, oppression and suppression. In other words, the colonial police was established neither as agent for promoting the rule of law, human rights, community safety nor for delivering social service, rather, the police was used in primitive expedition to further the goal of colonial annexation of territories and to quench protests as well as opposition against colonial exploitation.

In the same vein, Ikuteyijo and Rotimi (2012) described policing in the colonial era as anti-people. In fact the establishment of the colonial police was more to serve and protect the commercial interest of the colonial masters. This pitched the police against the people they were meant to protect and there were series of clashes between both parties. So right from the beginning, the purpose of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) was to protect government functionaries sometimes against "natives". The post-colonial Nigerian Police is a carryover from the colonial epoch. In this respect the character of the NPF has not changed. Military rule only emboldened the military character of the Nigerian police. As in the colonial period, the Police has deliberately been designed to appear tough and intimidating before the civilians, thus, alienating or disconnecting the people from the police more (Also, Ekeh, 2002).

The history of community-police relation in Nigeria, thus, has been described as frosty as the idea of policing imposed on the country by the colonial master was calculated to foster an antagonism between the policed and the police. To make matters worse, the corruption perception of the Nigerian police by the Nigerian people over the years heightened consequently the Nigerian police is perceived as the most corrupt government institution both locally and internationally worsening community-police relation. Under this state of affairs, the Nigerian police has been unable to fight crime let alone prevent it (Ikuteyijo and Rotimi, 2012).

In Nigeria, night guards and vigilante groups have emerged in response to theft and armed robbery. Vigilante groups existed in Nigeria for decades not only under civilian rule, but also during the previous military regimes of Generals Babangida, Abacha and Abubakar. They have traditionally been seen as an extension to the work of law enforcement officers in a country with high level of delinquency and lack of police training, equipment and personnel. Thus, the traditional concept of vigilante in Nigeria exclusively refers to un-armed voluntary citizen or group created in local communities to help the security forces confront common criminality and social violence by arresting suspected delinquents and handing them over to the police. The Nigerian law recognizes the lawfulness of vigilante groups arresting suspected criminals provided that they are unarmed and that the suspect is immediately handed over to the police (Aniche, 2018).

But with the corruption in the police, the suspected criminal easily find their ways back in the streets terrorising people and even in extreme cases unleashing vengeance on those people that handed them over to the police or masterminded their arrest by the police. The police is also accused of revealing the identity of their informants to the suspected criminals after being released by the police in questionable circumstances who later

go after the informants. Also, the police has on many occasions failed to redeem the price tag it puts on suspected criminals at large. The police has been accused of bribery and corruption, extortion of motorists, illegal road blocks, extra-judicial killings, intimidation and the use of excessive force on innocent citizens, giving arms to armed robbers, involvement in the armed robbery, mass and illegal arrest, unable to confront the armed robbers, etc. The police officers are sometimes use as private body guards and thugs by rich politicians and plays an ignoble role in election violence. All these perceptions of the people of the police disconnected them from the police.

The perception of the people of the police worsened to the extent that community members perceived as police informants are derided. Under this state of affairs, many Nigerian communities no longer looked to the Police Force for their protection from violent criminals or from other sources of danger. Instead they have resorted to other means like self-defence or mob action for their own protection including unregulated and often violent reprisals against suspected sources of their collective endangerment (Ekeh, 2002).

The increased incidence of crime since the end of the military regime has resulted to the proliferation of heavily armed vigilante groups in nearly every corners of Nigeria. Owing to erosion of confidence of the police by the people and mutual mistrust or distrust between the police and emerging vigilante security apparatus, the vigilante stopped handing over suspected criminals to the police and instead began to carry out extra-judicial executions and killings of suspected criminals. The point being made is that it was this disconnect between the police and the community that resulted to the emergence of the vigilante security in Nigeria. As a result of the failure or inability of the Police to tackle the security challenges confronting the country, some state governments began to help form, endorse and sponsor vigilante groups.

Community Policing and Community Development in Nigeria
As noted above, security is crucial to the community and constitutes one of the important social services provided through community development. In other words, it requires the cooperation of the government and the community. Communities cannot handle matters of security alone it requires the cooperation of the security agents like the police. Conversely, the police cannot ensure security or tackle crime alone, it requires partnering with the community.

Security is very essential to community development because both life and property have to be safeguarded for development to occur. No development, not even community development for that matter can take place where there are no peace, law and order. Security does not only facilitate development, it is one of the features or ingredients of development that is to say that it is co-extensive with development. Community policing is a desideratum and sine qua non for community development in Nigeria.

So far, community policing as implemented in Nigeria has not ensured security and safety in Nigeria let alone facilitate community development. Rather than community policing, the Nigerian police has been busy policing the community alienating the people more. Thus, insecurity, crimes and disorder have scared investors away from Nigeria, crippled economic activities and hindered development in the communities. So long as the Nigeria Police Force engages in policing the community instead of partnering with the community in matters of security, safety and development in the communities will continue to elude Nigeria.

Concluding Remarks
Community policing is not foreign or new to Africa, because long before European colonialism in Africa, the traditional Igbo society, for example, already had this model in place where the age grade and masquerade society among other roles or functions performed the role of law enforcement. Every adult male citizen was a member of the age grade and masquerade society, suggesting that policing or securing was the duty of the entire society (Aniche, 2018).

However, the European colonialism supplanted, for example, Igbo model of community policing with colonial police who alienated the people. This alienation continued in post-colonial or post-independence Nigeria deepening the distrust or mistrust between the people and the police. This lack of cooperation from the people has a serious consequence, which is the inability of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) to combat crime and tackle various security challenges in Nigeria leading to the proliferation of vigilante security apparatus particularly in the form of vigilante militia groups. But the proliferation of vigilante groups has only exacerbated security challenges in Nigeria owing to the distrust between them and the police. As a result community development has suffered in Nigeria. What the Nigerian police should do is to partner with the community in issues of security rather than policing the community.

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