

Community Policing and Insecurity in Rivers State (2015-2019)

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Abstract:

The main goal of the Nigeria Police Force is to protect life and property of its citizens but the recent trend of insecurity in Rivers State shows the inability of the Nigeria Police Force in performing these essential functions. These issues can be attributed to inadequate manpower, poor understanding of the environment they are posted to fight insecurity in Rivers State. This issue has created the need for community policing in order to reduce insecurity in Rivers State. This prompted the study to examine the prospect of community policing as a panacea to the problem of insecurity in Rivers State. Therefore, the study developed the following research questions: What is the role of community policing in reducing insecurity in various communities? What is the core principle of community policing in reducing insecurity? What are the challenges of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State? The study adopted the broken windows theory by James Wilson and George Kelling as its framework of analysis. A self-designed structured questionnaire was used to collect data from respondents, while purposive and simple random sampling techniques were employed to select three (3) communities out of two hundred and thirty-four (234) and three (3) local government areas out of twenty-three (23) in Rivers State, with a total sample size of three hundred (300), while two hundred and eighty (280) questionnaires were retrieved. Mean and rank order statistical methods were used to analyse the data. The study revealed that the major role of community policing is to protect life and property, covering and curbing the nooks and crannies in the communities, rapid response to security threats to prevent the breakdown of law and order. The core values of community policing are transparency and openness in their policing function, demonstrate commitment at all times to deliver best quality services. The challenges facing community policing in Rivers State are lack of trust between the police, vigilante groups and the members of the communities, poor public image of the police. The study thus recommends that there is a need for the Nigerian Police to strengthen their cooperation with the members of the various communities in Rivers State. This cooperation will endear them to the people instead of the present mutual suspicion and distrust which alienate people from them. In other words, it will improve community relations with the police, as well as increase information sharing, intelligence, crime detection and

prevention.

Keywords:

Community Policing, Nigeria Police, Police, Policing.

1. INTRODUCTION

Many communities in Nigeria are faced with an unprecedented high level of insecurity as a result of the high level of criminal activities such as robbery, cult-clash, arson, kidnapping for ransom, and murder cases. Insecurity issues have an overwhelming effect on human beings. McGoey, (2013, p. 43) pointed out that insecurity leads to psychological trauma, fear, displacements of people and scarcity of investors. This has become a source of concern to the government, stakeholders and the general public. Despite the effort of the police to combat insecurity, it appears not to be abated in Nigerian communities. The clamour for community policing as a proactive measure towards eradicating insecurity in these communities in Nigeria has therefore gained currency.

In Rivers State, community policing was initiated by the Nigeria Police in partnership with Police Community Relation Committees in the various community to mainly give the community ownership of the problem-solving processes which was to be achieved through the Police and the community working together. Though, community policing has been very difficult to implement in Rivers State since it was introduced in Nigeria in 2004, not until 2009 when the former Governor of Rivers State, Rt. Hon. Rotimi Chibuike Ameachi established an armless Neighbourhood Watch to watch over the streets, villages and towns in the state. Within this period there was however a reduction in crime and insecurity rate in various communities in the State but was terminated in 2013 due to irregularity.

However, since the termination of Neighbourhood Watch in the state, the state has experienced high rate of criminal activities such as theft, burglary, housebreaking, armed robbery, murder and cult clashes. This has also prompted many communities in the state to resort to self-help through the establishment and recruitment of local vigilante security outfits, the building of an electric fence around their houses whose operational modes isolated the police and violated legal precedents. This also has prompted the government of Rivers State under the leadership of Governor Nyesom Wike to propose the New Neighbourhood Corp as means of community policing in various communities. The primary aim of this Corp is to reduce crime and insecurity within their domain.

Statement of the Problem

The recent trend of insecurity in Rivers States shows the inability of security agencies especially the Nigeria Police Force to protect the life and property of its citizens. This has constituted a sort of worry to major stakeholders and the public at large. According to George (2017, p. 54), the issues of insecurity in Rivers State can be attributed to poor synergy between the Nigerian Police Force and the members of the various communities, inadequate equipment of Nigeria Police Force and poor understanding of the terrain or the environment of the various communities.

This trend is alarmingly so because of the increasing inability of the Nigerian police to effectively control insecurity due to some inherent challenges in the system. According to Ezuugwu (2017), each day unfolds with its strange tales of one form of insecurity. There is

hardly any day that passes without one crime or the other being committed in Rivers State. From cult-related killings, to kidnap or suicide, armed robber, the killing of innocent people has become more or less the order of the day. Indeed cult-related criminal activities have wreck untold havoc in Rivers State including the loss of lives and limbs and the creation of fear and insecurity. On the 18th of May 2019 at about 4 am four persons were beheaded and dropped along the road by a rival cult group in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State (The Tide, 2019). Similarly, on the 21st of May 2019, five persons were killed by cult-clash leaving eight persons injured in Gokana Local Government Area and no arrest was made (The Punch, 2019).

Basically, the role of the Police on security in Rivers State has become questionably contradictory because of its poor relationship with the public and the communities it purports to serve, and this has created the need for community policing in order to reduce insecurity in Rivers State. It is against this backdrop that we shall examine the impact of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State.

Research Questions

1. What is the role of community policing in reducing insecurity in various communities in Rivers State?
2. What is the core principle of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State?
3. What are the challenges of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the prospect of community policing as a panacea to the problem of insecurity in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives are:

- a. To identify the role of community policing in reducing insecurity in various communities in Rivers State.
- b. To examine the core principle of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State.
- c. To examine the challenges of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State.

2. Literature Review

Concept of Policing

The word police are related to the Greek word politeuein, which means to be a citizen or engage in political activity, and polis, which means a city or state (Roberg, Crank & Kuykendall, 2000, p. 12). Police in this sense carry out the functions of law enforcement, maintenance of law and order, service and gather information. Thus, the Police are the major representatives of the legal system in their transactions with citizens. They are also the major emergency arm of the community in times of personal and public crises (Reiss, 1971, p. 65).

However, policing is the role played by the Police in protecting the property and wellbeing of the citizens in a given country (Newburn, 2004, p. 23). In his own view, Bowden (1978, p. 67) sees the Police roles to include standing as a “buffer between elite and masses” and to perform the essential holding operation against the mal-contents until military force could be applied in a punitive and salutary manner.

Within the context of political system, policing is a function carried out within a country by various laws enforcement agencies or institutions. It involves identifying crime or an intelligence problem and investigating to preempt, neutralize or confront the problem. Without obtaining intelligence information about the target's activities and operations (which should be credible, accurate, valid and reliable), policing to bring about public safety and security will be ineffective and inefficient.

In policing activities Police officers try to resist suppressible crimes occurring commonly within locations and under circumstances that warrant opportunity for police officers to use reasonable measures to deter or apprehend offenders. Such suppressible crimes include burglary, robbery, car theft, assault and sex crimes. The best approach to these types of crimes is the use of covert surveillance and decoys-plain cloth patrol officers. Often, the measure adopted may involve police officers money couriers, nuns, pastors or priests. These disguises enable Police officers to stake out suspects and possible crime locations (Wroblewski and Hess, 2003, p. 203). Policing has a measurable scope and nature. Jaja (2005, p. 11) asserted that:

Policing is concerned with the maintenance and preservation of rules of external conduct of human beings in society that is rules and norms which people are required to observe and obey.

According to Alemika and Chukwuma (2000, p. 43), policing involves coercive and/or ideological regimentation of social life through the activities of police and sundry state intelligence and security forces, and through other measures aimed at deducting and suppressing behaviours, actions, and orientations that threatens the prevailing social order. While Nwolise (2004, p. 77) argued that policing involves conflict resolution conflicts emanating from inequalities in society leading to trade disputes, demonstrations and riots.

Generally, policing involves carrying out police responsibilities in the country or society they serve. The main responsibilities of the police centre on the prevention and detection of crime, apprehension of offenders, preservation of law and order, protection of lives and property, enforcement of all laws and regulations directly charged and performance of military duties within or outside the country. In exercising these functions, the police carry out responsibilities that relate specifically to investigation, recording, booking, accepting bail or temporary detention, collection and preservation of reports to the prosecutor in usable form and testifying in court.

Concept of Community Policing

The main aim of this study is to examine the prospect of community policing as a panacea to the problem of insecurity. However, there has not been any acceptable definition of community policing by different scholars. But community policing is generally known as the collaboration between Police and members of the public towards fighting and reducing insecurity within the public domain. According to Onyeije, Anyaoha and Osita-Njoku (2018, p. 23), community policing is a strategy that focuses on the police building ties with community members. These ties enable the police to work closely with community members in the fight against insecurity. In the same vein, Olaolu (2015, p. 3) noted that community policing is a policy that requires the police to adopt a proactive approach to address public

safety concerns. Tope (2016) see community policing as a strategy that does not only allow the police to proactively act beyond mere crime-fighting and insecurity reduction, but also to partner with the community members in setting the security precedence's in the society and fashioning ways of resolving identifiable problems in the community.

However, community policing was originated in 17th century in London during the London Metropolitan Police District formation. Community policing as a security intervention strategy was later adopted by the United States in the 1970s and in England 1978, but was officially established in 2004 by Inspector General of Police Tafa Balogun (Ikuteyijo, 2009, p. 27). Indeed, community policing was aimed at creating a partnership between the Police and the community that would ensure a secure and safe environment for all people. According to Musa (2015, p. 78), community policing is a viewpoint that promotes organizational strategies that support the systematic use of partnerships and problem-solving techniques to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime.

Community policing involves a logical investment and inclusion of credible local guards, vigilante groups, able-bodied youths, traditional rulers, and chiefs in the conventional police system for achieving a far-reaching success in insecurity prevention and control at the grassroots or community level (Ogbonnay, 2017, p. 33). Similarly, Folashade, Okeshola and Mediara (2013, p. 67) asserted that community policing advocates that police should be highly visible in the community through foot patrols and should integrate themselves into communities to ensure confidence and trust from communities. Community policing has, without doubt, been embraced in Nigeria as a model for the prevention of insecurity.

Similarly, Ikuteyijo and Rotimi (2012, p. 191) noted that 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 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 (Okafor and Aniche, 2015, p. 17). This represents a paradigm shift from traditional policing or the 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.

Like several other nations all over the world, the Nigerian Police force embraced the philosophy of community policing in 2004. Community policing is a paradigm shift that 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, p. 54). Kappeler & Gaines (2009, p. 43) illustrated the potential of community policing in few sentences below:

Community policing is a dramatic change in the philosophy that determines the way police agencies engage the public. It incorporates a philosophy that broadens the police mission

from a narrow focus on crime and law enforcement to a mandate encouraging the exploration of creative solutions for a host of community concerns-including crime, fear of crime, perceptions of disorder, quality of life and neighborhood conditions.

An obvious prospect of community policing, according to Coquilhat (2008, p. 42) is that it offers the public a larger window into police activity and provides opportunities for 'grassroots' support for police. However, communities with existing capacity are more likely to participate in community policing but are less likely to benefit from it because, in general, they are already proactively addressing issues to increase community safety. Okeshola & Mudiare (2013, p. 81) also note that, community policing in Nigeria presumes that it demands better communication and understanding between police and the public. It also encourages a more liberal and tolerant attitude towards criminals. Thus, as a proactive policing, community has a prospect in Nigeria as it is more effective both in preventing offending and in achieving offender detection and remedial action post offense.

In spite of high expectations and widespread support for this type of policing, the impact of such approaches on corruption and accountability has not been established. In terms of anti-corruption benefits, bringing police forces closer to the community can strengthen and weaken the accountability of the police to the public. For the latter, community policing could create more opportunities for corruption/unethical practices by promoting closer ties between the police and the community and providing opportunities for long-term personal interactions, preferential treatments and the development of corrupt networks (Cheurprakobkit, 2008, p. 39).

It seems pertinent to observe that the dismal image of the Nigeria Police accounts for the noncooperation by the public who are often reluctant to volunteer useful information to the police. Yet, the tasks of crime prevention and detection, as well as prosecution of offenders, cannot be successfully performed without the cooperation of the public. Other allegations leveled against the police include arbitrariness in the exercise of its powers of arrest and prosecution, corruption and perversion of justice, use of crude techniques of investigation, collusion with criminals and incessant cases of accidental discharge of lethal bullets (Olujinmi, 2005, p. 21)

Lastly, despite the relevance of community policing in modern policing practice and the fact that there is much literature on the subject by Nigerian authors, the program is not taken so seriously in the country. Cheurprakobkit (2008, p. 60) acknowledges the fact that community policing has become a widespread model of policing in the US. Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) has been created by the Justice Department to support innovative work in Community Policing. But Nigeria has embraced the philosophy since 2004, but it has not been given such importance in the country. Abiri (2011, p. 12) reported the outcome of a project on the implementation of community policing between 2001 and 2007 undertaken by CLEEN Foundation. Being the first of its kind, the project had an initial pilot phase and a subsequent follow up phase that aimed to generate first-hand experience and lessons in the implementation of community policing in the country. Abiri (2011, p. 12) observed that there are possible challenges with implementing the programme, because people were politicizing it and the police were not supportive of the program.

Concept of Insecurity

The concept of insecurity would be best understood by first presenting the concept of

security. In the view of Akin (2008, p. 31) security refers to the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions. It is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives and properties. It embraces all measures designed to protect and safeguard the citizenry and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses and the nation against sabotage or violent occurrence (Ogunleye, Adewale, Alese and Ogunde, 2011; Omoyibo and Akpomera, 2012; El-Rufai, 2012). According to Igbuzor (2011, p. 234) it demands safety from chronic threats and protection from harmful disruption.

According to Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor-Robara (2013, p. 52), insecurity is the antithesis of security and has attracted such common descriptors as want of safety, danger, hazard uncertainty, want of confidence, state of doubt, inadequately guarded or protected, instability, trouble, lack of protection and being unsafe and others. They further argued that these common descriptors point to a condition where there exists a vulnerability to harm, loss of life, property or livelihood. Therefore, they consider insecurity to be a state of not knowing, a lack of control and the inability to take defensive action against forces that portend harm or danger to an individual or group, or that make them vulnerable.

This means insecurity is a critical term employed as a measure primarily aimed at raising subjective security without a genuine or commensurate concern for the effects of that measure on the people. Perception of security can increase objective security when it affects or deters malicious behavior such as the insurgency and terrorist attacks as with visual signs of security protections as obtained in most developed countries. They include video surveillance, alarm systems in a home, or an anti-theft system in a car, such as a vehicle tracking system or warning sign. Since some intruders will decide not to attempt to break into such areas or vehicles, there can be less damage to windows in addition to protection of valuable objects inside.

Adegbami (2013, p. 74) observed that insecurity has held the Nigerian state to ransom. For example, Boko-Haram held the country to ransom and made the nation's security agencies useless at one point, especially in the North East. Lamenting on the level of security deterioration in the north, Falana (2016, p. 18) blamed the government for allowing things to get out of control before declaring the state of emergency. He asked the government to "Stop shedding crocodile tears over insecurity". Falana (2016, p. 93) therefore suggested that:

The Federal Government should equip the security personnel before getting them deployed to fight against insecurity in the country rather than shedding crocodile tears for the victims of insecurity. He further observed that the conditions of less-equipped policemen and soldiers, who were being deployed to fight terrorists that were armed with more sophisticated weapons is more worrisome. It is inexcusable to deploy ill-trained, ill-equipped and ill-motivated soldiers and policemen to war zones, armed with only AK 47 rifles without bulletproofs, serviceable vehicles, communication gadgets to fight suicide bombers with more sophisticated weapons.

Similarly, Tella, (2015, p. 319) stated that the security personnel were not being provided with life insurance and accommodation, adding that their salaries were not paid regularly while the families of those who lost their lives in battle were not usually informed officially. He suggested that Federal Government should stop risking the lives of soldiers and

policemen who are made to fight a guerrilla war without any training. The condition above, was confirmed by Hassan (2014, p. 19) is characterized by the forced exodus of populations, creating refugee flows, genocide, rape of women, ethnic cleansing, organized killing of the unarmed, child soldiering, anti-personal mining of farmlands.

In Rivers State, there have been multiple reports of incidents of clashes between rival cult groups over issues such as access to illegal bunkering camps, royalties from oil businesses, and job opportunities provided by oil companies in Emohua, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Port Harcourt and Gokana Local Government Areas. Communities in Local Government Areas such as Emohua, Gokana, Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, AkukuToru, Asari-Toru, Degema, Eleme and Port Harcourt have been witnessing increasing cult and gang-related violence. On 30th of April 2019, two people were killed in a clash suspected to be between the Deebam and Deywell cult groups. Then in March 2019, as many as fifteen people were reportedly killed when cultists shot indiscriminately into a marketplace in Gokana Local Government Area of Rivers State (Thisday, 2019). In the same vein, in Ogba/ Egbama/Ndoni Local Government Area, as many as 68 persons have been killed so far since last year as a result of cult-related activities in the area (Vanguard, 2018). On 20th of May 2018, police reportedly engaged cultists in a gun battle, killing over 20 of them (Punch, 2018). Two months later, in July 2018, there was a reported clash between Deywell and Deebam cult groups that killed 18 (Punch, 2018). In September 2018, another clash between cult groups reportedly killed another 17 (Thisday, 2018).

Similarly, on the 12th of March 2019, two people were killed in a clash suspected to be between the Deebam and Deywell cult groups in Emouha Local Government Area of Rivers State (Vangurd, 2019). Then on 25th of March 2019, as many as fifteen people were reportedly killed when cultists shot indiscriminately into a marketplace (Thisday, 2019). On the 14th of April 2019, four persons were said to have been beheaded in Omuoko, Aluu in the Ikwerre Local Government Area and three persons were killed in the Port Harcourt, Obio/Akpor and Emohua Local Government Areas. Those beheaded were identified as Rhino, Justice Azubuike, Nwobueze Woke and another whose name couldn't be ascertained as of press time (Punch, 2019).

Appraising Rivers State security problems shows that security in Rivers State is synonymous with an individual who puts iron bars across his or her windows which eventually prevents the individual from escaping a fire outbreak. For them, the only condition for the maintenance of peace and the guarantee of security is by upholding law and order. By this, the state could be secured against threats which may include low-level civil disorder, crime, organized violence, or even an armed insurgency.

Community Policing and Insecurity

Scholars have made several contributions to the issue of community policing and insecurity reduction in Nigeria. Odinkalu (2005, p. 38) for instance, argued that the effectiveness of the police in the communities will reduce the rate of insecurity. He further argued that if the police do not have good vehicles, gadgets and all the necessary instruments and equipment needed to combat crime in these communities, the rate of insecurity may continue to increase. In the view of Igbo (2007, p. 90), community policing since its introduction in Nigeria in 2004, has witnessed the increase of foot and motorized patrol teams which is referred to as the Beat Patrol System (BPS). This involves the training of some police officers to squad

some stations, and protect some sensitive areas. BPS increases the chances of criminals being apprehended and in this way deters or diminishes criminal activities wherever they establish a presence. Mobolaji and Akim (2014, p. 15) pointed out that a community that wants its style of policing should provide the necessary tools for the police to enable them to combat insecurity.

The use of police patrol teams in the practice of community, policing is one important approach to fixing the problem of insecurity in the neighbourhoods and communities. Sherman and Eck (2004, p. 22) opined that police patrol can reduce crime and insecurity, but if only it is specifically targeted at insecurity hotspots. In the words of Dalglish and Myhill (2004, p. 52), police patrol and particularly foot patrol teams of the police create a positive impact on the public perceptions of the police. Innes (2004, p. 46) posits that the visible presence of police officers patrolling especially on foot may also act as a “control signal” which is a sign that the authorities are taking the problems of the local people seriously.

There is a need for effective police partnership with the community in reducing and controlling insecurity, this will help in shaping policy objectives and interventions, as well as evaluate them. Effective community policing depends on optimizing positive contact between patrol officers and community members, police departments, supplementing automobiles patrols with the foot, bicycles, scooters, as well as adding “mini-stations” to bring the police closer to the community. A regular community meeting between the police and the community offers the latter the opportunity to air concerns or views and find ways to address them. But most importantly, community members would find it difficult to share information with the police if their identity and security are compromised. Hence, the police must show commitment to protecting the identities of concerned citizens willing to share information concerning community safety and insecurity control.

Igwim (2015, p. 37) maintains that problem-solving issues require a lot more tough energy and action than traditional incidents-based police response to crime and insecurity. In full partnership, the police and the community residents identify core problems, propose solutions, and implement a solution. Thus, community members identify concerns they feel are most threatening to their safety and wellbeing. These will become a priority for joint police-community interventions. Bolm and Haley (2005, p. 77) point that for this problem-solving process to operate effectively, the police need to devote time and attention to discovering community concerns. In the view of Alao (2015, p. 111), the police educate community members through effective periodic community meetings between the police and the people on how to track down criminals in their communities.

Fundamentally, policing the society is said to be business of all; but policing Nigerian society seems to have been less intriguing in nature. Jaja (2005, p. 12) has viewed that police-community relations emphasize the relationship between the police and communities, as co-producers of police services and partners in community policing, bearers of responsibilities for preventing crime, reducing insecurity and improving the quality of life in communities where the police serve. However, the relevant literature on police-community relations is predominantly on the strain relations between the police and the significant segment of the population across communities. Ikufeyijo and Rotimi (2010, p. 86) expressed “the no-love lost relationship between the police and the public from the colonial era to post-colonial” as a preconceived notion of repressive, exploitative, and hostile policing of our society from the on-set.

3. Methodology

Research methodology is the systematic and theoretical analysis of the methods applied to a field of study. However, the methodology used for the study is presented under the following: research design, study and population, sample and sampling technique, method of data collection, method of data analyses validity/reliability of the instrument. A research design is the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. The research design for this study was a descriptive survey through a questionnaire. The purpose of using a descriptive survey was to collect detailed information that describes an existing phenomenon.

The population of the study consisted of two hundred and thirty-four (234) communities/towns and twenty-three (23) local government areas in three (3) senatorial zones of Rivers State, with a population of five million, one hundred and ninety-eight thousand, seven hundred and sixteen (5,198,716). The study adopted the purposive sampling technique in the selection of the sample size of three hundred (300) questionnaires. This number was considered enough and adequate in view of the statistical requirements, time frame and available resources. This means that three (3) populated communities and towns such as Omoku, Emohua and Bodo were selected from two hundred and thirty-four (234) communities and towns in Rivers State, while three (3) local government areas such as Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Emohua and Gokana were selected from 23 local government areas in the three senatorial zones of Rivers State. That is, 100 respondents from Omoku community/town in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area in Rivers-West Senatorial District, 100 respondents from Emohua community/town in Emohua Local Government Area in Rivers-East Senatorial District and 100 respondents from Bodo community/town from Gokana Local Government Area in Rivers-South-East Senatorial District was selected for the study. Simple random sampling was also applied in selecting target respondents, which means that police officers (senior and junior), local vigilante groups and members of the community living and working in the three (3) selected communities/towns, local government areas and senatorial zones of Rivers State were used for the study. The study used primary and secondary data. The primary source comprises data from direct responses to interviews with selected respondents, participant observation and structured questionnaires. These instruments enabled us to elicit information on the problems which the study seeks to unravel.

However, secondary sources of data include materials from the Internet, textbooks, publications, government documents, journals and conference/seminar papers. The instrument used by the researcher was a questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire was structured to elicit the information necessary for this study in the three (3) selected communities/towns, local government areas and senatorial zones of Rivers State. It is a questionnaire on the impact of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State; with only two sections (section A and B), and a total of thirty (30) items and the respondents are provided with the following options: SA-Strongly Agree = 4 points, A-Agree = 3 points, D-Disagree = 1 points, SD-Strongly Disagree = 1 point, The instrument to be used will be given to the researcher's supervisor. The supervisor's suggestions will be interpreted into a final draft of the instrument. The test-retest reliability technique was used to check the validity of the information collection tool before the distribution of the questionnaires.

In carrying out this research works, mean and rank order statistical methods were used in

relation to the items of factors studied. The conclusion will be taken based on the calculated mean scores. A criterion means is determined as follows:

$$SA=4; A-3; SD-2; D-1; \text{ This } 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = \frac{10}{4} = 2.5$$

Hence, the sum of the mean divided by the total number of respondents this 2.5 becomes the criterion mean, here negative and positive responses are determined. Any item that has a mean score which is below 2.5 is regarded as negative and therefore rejected whole any time from 2.5 and above is regarded as positive and therefore accepted.

4. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework adopted for this study is Broken Windows Theory by James Wilson and George Kelling (1982, p. 32). The theory suggests that there is a direct connection between the appearance of anarchy and actual crime (Giddens, 2004, p. 214). Giddens (2004), Haralambos and Holborn (2004), Jones (2005), and Inciardi (2007) noted that if a single broken window is allowed to go unrepaired in a neighborhood (i.e, when residents overlook minor offences like prostitution, drunkenness, pick-pocketing etc), it sends a message to potential offenders that neither police nor local residents are committed to the upkeep of the community. In time, the broken windows will be joined by further signs of the disorder, vandalism, and abandoned vehicles (the minor crime will graduate to bigger crimes like kidnapping, assassination, rape, burglary, fraud). The area will begin a gradual process of decay, and insecurity will flourish and law-abiding citizens will be afraid and seek to leave and will be replaced by abnormal newcomers such as drug dealers, the homeless and people on parole (Giddens, 2004, p. 19). Skogan (1986, p. 12) supported it by saying that anarchy reduces the extent to which the local community could exercise control over its own affairs and insecurity might increase as a consequence of this

This theory is relevant to this study because it shows that public disorder offences like vandalism and rowdy behaviour can create a downward spiral of neighbourhood deterioration and fear of insecurity that leads to more deterioration and more serious crimes if not checked by the community (i.e, minor offences like prostitution, drunkenness, pick-pocketing etc can degenerate to bigger crimes like kidnapping, assassination, rape, burglary, fraud when overlooked by community and police or other law enforcement agencies). This is because little issues of insecurity like crimes of vandalism, broken windows, and others tend to portray the impression that nobody cares about the community and that residents as well as the police have lost control over the community. On the other hand, increased police presence and enforcement of informal rules of conduct and laws can make a community seem less chaotic and safer.

Broken windows theory can be incorporated into the concept of community policing in the sense that collective effort by both the Police and community dwellers can help alleviate the rate of insecurity in the various community in Rivers State as the Police see residents as partners in development and vice versa. Broken Windows theory is very useful in explaining the synergy between the Police and the community in insecurity detection because with the constant contact of the Police and the members of the community, both minor and major problems of crimes that lead to insecurity will be solved and it will reduce crime and fear of insecurity in the Rivers State. The theory encourages the public and the Police to analyze crime, insecurity and develop solutions towards solving insecurity problems in a given area.

When insecurity occurs as a result of crime, residents and Police should try to find out why it happened and what can be done to avoid it in the future rather than simply disposing of the issues.

5. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter of the study deals with the presentation of analyzed data and the result of the research questions stated in the study. We administered three hundred (300) questionnaires to Police officers (senior and junior), local vigilante groups and members of the community, but only two hundred and eighty (280) were retrieved. The data was analyzed in form of tables; means are computed from the research questions.

Table 3.1: Social Characteristics of Respondents

Security Agency	Frequency	Percentage
Nigeria Police Force	85	30.35
Local Vigilant Groups	52	18.57
Members of the Communities	143	51.07
Total	280	100%
Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	180	64.28
Female	100	35.71
Total	280	100%
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	130	46.42
Married	150	53.57
Total	280	100%
Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	32	11.42
Secondary	66	23.57
OND/NCE	89	31.78
B.Sc/HND	93	33.21
Total	280	100
Cadre of Security Agents and Members of the Community	Frequency	Percentage
Senior Police Officers	30	11.07
Junior Police Officers	45	16.07
Grade 6-12	101	36.07
Grade 13-16	94	33.57
Total	280	100

Sources: Field Survey (2020)

The result in table 3.1: shows that item one had 85(30.35%) respondents from Nigerian Police, 52(18.57%) from the Local Vigilante Groups, while 143(51.07%) from the members of the communities. Item two also shows that male respondents are 180(64.28%), more than the female respondents which are 100(35.71%) as it was purposively decided for the study. This is made so by the researcher because men were the most people available during the distribution of questionnaires in the field. Item three shows that 130(46.42%) respondents are

single, while 150(53.57%) are married. However, this has implications for the research study because, we can conclude that the married respondents will have a lot of stake on problems raised in the instrument, as they have more responsibilities compared to their single counterparts. Item four shows that 32(11.42%) have primary education, 66(23.57%) have secondary education, 89(31.78%) have OND/NCE whereas and 93(33.21%) have B.Sc. Finally, item five show that there are fewer respondents from the Senior Cadre of Nigerian Police with 30(11.07%), Junior Cadre has 45(16.07%), Grade 6-12 has 101(36.07%) and Grade 13-16 has 94(33.57%) this shows that Grade 6-12 has the highest respondents than the Grade 13-16.

Research Question One: What is the role of community policing in reducing insecurity in various communities in Rivers State?

Table 3.2: Mean scores of respondents on the role of community policing in reducing insecurity in various communities in Rivers State

n=185

	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	SD (2)	D (1)	Total	Mean	Rank order	Remark
1	Partnering with the police to reduce insecurity	640	240	60	10	950	3.39	1 st	Accepted
2	Covering and curbing the nooks and cronies of the communities	400	270	80	50	800	2.85	4 th	Accepted
3	Rapid response to security threats to prevent the breakdown of law and order	380	240	120	45	785	2.80	5 th	Accepted
4	Reporting criminal cases to the police	560	300	50	15	925	3.30	2 nd	Accepted
5	Arresting criminals and handing them over to the police for further prosecution	480	285	70	30	865	3.08	3 rd	Accepted

Criterion mean = 2.5

The outcome in table one show that items 1 and 4 had mean values of 3.39 and 3.30 respectively, while items 5, 2 and 3 had mean values of 3.08, 2.85 and 2.80 respectively. This means that all the items were accepted by all the respondents as the role of community policing in reducing insecurity in various communities in Rivers State, because their mean values were above the criterion mean of 2.50. These indicate that Nigerian Police and members of the community are aware of the role of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: What is the core principle of community policing in reducing insecurity?

Table 3.3: Mean scores of respondents on the core principle of Community Policing in reducing insecurity.

n=185

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	SD (2)	D (1)	Total	Mean	Rank Order	Remark
1	Respect and protect human rights	540	216	62	42	860	3.07	2 nd	Accepted
2	Be transparent and open in their policing function	520	273	80	19	892	3.18	1 st	Accepted
3	Demonstrate commitment at all times to deliver best quality services	488	306	80	19	893	3.18	1 st	Accepted
4	Ensure that citizens with a genuine sense of grievances against the police have effective redress	488	291	86	28	853	3.04	3 rd	Accepted
5	Be accountable and properly answerable for what they do	436	258	102	34	830	2.96	4 th	Accepted

Criterion mean = 2.5

Table 3.3 showed that items 2 and 3 had mean values of 3.18 and 3.18 respectively, while 1, 4 and 5 had mean values of 3.07, 3.04 and 2.96 respectively, were accepted by all respondents as the core principle of community policing in reducing insecurity, because the mean values of the accepted items were above the criterion mean of 2.50. The core principle of community policing in reducing insecurity include the following: Respect and protect human rights, be transparent and open in their policing function, demonstrate commitment at all times to deliver best quality services, ensure that citizens with a genuine sense of grievances against the police have effective redress and be accountable and properly answerable for what they do.

Question Three: What are the challenges of communities policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State?

Table 3.4: Mean scores of respondents on the challenges of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State.

n=185

S/N	Items	SA (4)	A (3)	SD (2)	D (1)	Total	Mean	Rank Order	Remark
1	Lack of trust between the	540	246	66	30	882	3.15	1 st	Accepted

	police, vigilant groups and the members of the communities affect the effectiveness of community-policing								
2	Poor public image of the police affect the smooth operations of community policing.	420	264	96	39	819	2.92	4 th	Accepted
3	Inadequate manpower in the police affects the operations of community policing.	480	297	58	32	867	3.09	2 nd	Accepted
4	Corruption based on poor working condition of the police affect the effectiveness of community policing.	396	300	112	25	833	2.97	3 rd	Accepted
5	Low or poor educational background of some members of the police affects community policing adversely.	320	219	218	18	775	2.76	5 th	Accepted

Criterion mean = 2.5

Table 3.4 showed that items 1 and 3 had mean values of 3.15 and 3.09 respectively, while 4, 2 and 5 had mean values of 2.97, 2.92 and 2.76 respectively, were accepted by all respondents as the challenges of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State, because the mean values of the accepted items were above the criterion mean of 2.50. This shows that there the challenges of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State.

Discussion of Findings

The role of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State

The findings shows that the role of community policing in reducing insecurity are to partnering with the police to reduce insecurity, covering and curbing the nooks and cronies of the communities, rapid respond to security threats to prevent the breakdown of law and order, reporting criminal cases to the police and arresting criminals and handing them over to the police for further prosecution. This shows that items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in table two had the mean values of 3.39, 3.30, 3.08, 2.85 and 2.80 respectively, which were accepted by all respondents as the role of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State. This finding is in synergy with Emeka (2015) who found out that community policing is served as an active agent or partner in promoting security in any society. In the same vein, Njoku (2012) found in his work that community policing encourages creative solutions to crime and insecurity problems that begin in our neighborhoods, villages, and towns.

The core values of community policing in reducing insecurity

The findings also show that the core values of community policing in reducing insecurity are to respect and protect human rights, be transparent and open in their policing function, demonstrate commitment at all times to deliver the best quality services, ensure that citizens with a genuine sense of grievances against the police have effective redress and be accountable and properly answerable for what they do. This shows that items 2, 3, 1, 4 and 5 in table four had mean values of 3.18, 3.18, 3.07, 3.04, and 2.96 respectively, which were accepted by all respondents as the core principle of community policing in reducing insecurity. This finding is inconsonant with empirical studies of Chukwuma (2011), who carried out a study on the core values of community policing in Nigeria. His study was aimed at examining the primary core values of community policing. The study concluded that the primary core values of community policing are to respect and protect the fundamental human right of its citizens and to make the environment a crimeless haven.

The challenges of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State

The study also reviewed the challenges of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State, and some of the challenges are lack of trust between the police, vigilant groups and the members of the communities, poor public image of the police, inadequate manpower in the police, corruption based on poor working condition of the police and low or poor educational background of some members of the police affects community policing adversely. This shows that items 1, 3, 4, 2 and 5 in table four had the mean values of 3.15, 3.09, 2.97, 2.92 and 2.76 respectively, were accepted by all respondents as the challenges of community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State. This finding is in line with Nte (2012) who found out in his work that there is no significant relationship between police partnership and insecurity prevention in Nigeria communities. This finding is also in synergy with John (2015) who found out in his work that the failure of the community policing to function effectively in Nigeria is due to both societal and systemic problems identified above (Akuul, 2011). This finding is supported by Musa (2012) who found out that the inability of the police to corroborate with the members of the community to reduce insecurity is attributed to poor understanding between them (Akuul, 2011, Aremu, 2009). On the other hand, Umar and Bappi (2014) found out that Nigerian Police openly and secretly show their dislike and hatred to the philosophy of community-oriented policing.

6. CONCLUSION

The inability of the Nigeria Police Force to protect the life and property of its citizens has created the need for community policing in order to reduce insecurity in Rivers State. Therefore, the significant role of community policing is to promote peaceful coexistence, initiating programmes and interventions to check or combat insecurity and threats in various communities in Nigeria. Community policing also helps to improve the performance of the Police in insecurity detection, prevention and control, which ordinarily, would have diminished the quality of Police work and relationship with the community if the residents were excluded in the art of policing in the community.

Despite the above assertion, the findings of this study concluded that the challenges facing community policing in reducing insecurity in Rivers State are lack of trust between the Police, vigilant groups and the members of the various communities, the poor public image of the Police, inadequate manpower in the Police and corruption based on the poor working condition of the Police affects community policing adversely.

Recommendations

Based on the above findings, the following recommendations are made.

1. There is a need for the Nigerian Police to strengthen their cooperation with the members of the communities in Rivers State. This cooperation will endear them to the people instead of the present mutual suspicion and distrust which alienate people from them. In other words, it will improve community relations with the police, as well as increase information sharing, intelligence, crime detection and prevention.
2. The Nigerian police and members of the communities should join hands together to protect human fundamental rights, be transparent and open in their policing function, demonstrate commitment at all times to deliver the best quality services, ensure that citizens with a genuine sense of grievances against the police have effective redress.
3. The members of the community should be educated through the mass media, workshops and seminars to understand the importance of collaborating with the police in combating insecurity in their communities. This will help to increase the cooperation between the police and community members in combating insecurity.
4. A forum should be established in the community in which the community members freely meet with the Police to discuss crime and insecurity-related issues that affect the communities in Rivers State.

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