



Ethno-religious Identity and the Quest for Community Policing Participation in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Community policing is an awe-inspiring mechanism for managing crime and social problems. However, ethnic and religious identity and conflicts have lean towards to affect the efficacy and viability of the community policing program in Nigeria. With a strong commitment and plans by the government in addressing crime and other social ills, through community policing, almost no outcomes appear to be imminent because Nigeria is continuously overloaded by ethnic and religious sentiments. This paper investigates the impact of ethnic and religious identity and conflict on Nigerian's community policing program. The paper contends that ethno-religious identity and conflict not only undermines the viability and efficacy of community policing to foster security, additionally debilitates the unity and stability of the country. The fundamental argument is that unrestrained competition among the various ethnic and religious groups have affected public relations, and endanger the citizens' participation in community policing program negatively. The paper concludes that, enlightenment campaign, especially among youth on ethno-religious tolerance, citizens' participation in collective security, inter-religious and ethnic tolerance and harmony, police officers' effective interaction with the citizens would restore public confidence, thereby enhances citizens' participation in community policing program.

Keywords: community policing, participation, ethnic identity, religious identity, identity politics

Introduction

Typically, Nigeria is generally seen as a severely partitioned state where significant social and political issues are vigorously and sometimes fiercely contested for, along the line of the perplexing religious, ethnic and sectional divisions in the nation (Smyth & Robinson, 2001). Such contestation has seriously influenced both the security and solidness of the nation negatively, therefore unmasks the deficiencies of the conventional security model of policing.

Ethnicity and religion has for quite some time been perceived as basic variables in affecting public attitudes towards the police (Wu, 2014; Wu, Su, & Hu, 2015). A study led in Spain has found that social order that are established along religious lines are more inclined to extraordinary and

prolonged clash than those partitioned by political, regional and ethnic contrasts (Reynal-Querol, 2002). Maybe this reality clarifies the prime position that religious and ethnic sentiments possesses on Nigeria's security pyramid. As we might find in this article, religiously persuaded brutality has tormented the nation more than some other security challenge. Ethnic specific issues, such as cultural barriers, language differences, ethnic discrimination, and lack of trust with the police may strain police relationship with the public. The above submission may also hamper citizen's participation intention in community policing program. In Nigeria, the police institution is being controlled and managed by the central government; this therefore, necessitates posting officers indiscriminately disregarding their state of origin. The history of policing in Nigeria is, indeed, replete with examples of conflict between the police and the public, because of ineffectiveness, corruption, unprofessionalism, brutal and uncivil to the members of the community (Udenfuna, Madu, Akalefu & Jumare, 2014; Alemika, 2013; DFID & SJG, 2010).

Surviving writings have generally discuss race/ethnicity on citizens' perceptions of police administration, for instance, Wu, Su, and Hu, (2015); Wu, (2014) states that race/ethnicity has dependably been acknowledged as basic elements in determining peoples' perceptions of police administration. Correspondingly, Osaghae and Suberu (2005) attest that ethnicity and religion have dependably been a standout amongst the most remarkable components of Nigerian national identity. Additionally, there are numerous causal diagnoses of ethnic and religious identity and conflicts in Nigeria (Agbibo, 2013; Abdullahi & Saka, 2007, Aleyomi, 2012, Okpanachi, 2010), unfortunately, the literatures on this expanse pay premium attention on economic, sociopolitical and governance issues that precipitate violent conflicts generally. While important, the above line of inquiry basically overlooks other parts such as the impact of ethno-religious identity and conflicts on citizen's participation intention in community policing. This omission is problematic given the



salient features of ethnic and religious identity and conflicts in Nigeria. This article presents, as a state of takeoff, a systematic investigation into the unmistakable elements that impeded citizen's intention to participate in community policing program in Nigeria. Principally, this article clears up some significant concepts i.e. ethnicity, religion and community policing. The article additionally examines identity politics and conflicts as unmistakable obstacles to viable community policing. Identity politics and conflicts, particularly amongst major and minor ethnic/religious groups appeared to have obstructed different attempts at effective community policing participation. In conclusion, the article offers creative ways through which the tide of ethno-religious identity and conflicts can be stemmed so as to pave way for a successful community policing participation. Religion and ethnic identity now and again assumes huge parts in societal agreement; yet these concepts regularly are utilized as instrument for political and other vested interests to the disadvantage of peace and societal congruity (Doornbos, 1991; Nnoli, 1978; Osaghae, 1995:11). Along these lines, this article expects to unbiasedly uncover the negative deployment of ethnic and religion identities as instruments for social disharmony, consequently its effect on community policing.

Conceptual Analysis: Ethnicity, Religion and Community policing

Integral to the comprehension of identity politics and conflicts are the concepts of religion, community policing, and ethnicity. According to Nnoli (2007) "Ethnicity is a social phenomenon associated with contact among ethnic groups that exist within the same political system. it is characterized by cultural prejudice and social discrimination." From ethnicity, two principle methodologies can be gathered from the writing. From one viewpoint, ethnicity is considered a primordial group trademark that a few researchers contend is naturally based (Davies & Rothchild, 1996; Van den Berghe, 1981). According to Isajiw (1992), the primordialist methodology is the most established in sociological and anthropological writing. It contends that ethnicity is something given, attributed during childbirth, getting from the kinfolk and-tribe structure of human culture, and consequently something pretty fixed and perpetual" (p. 5). The two key focuses in the primordialist theory are (a) that ethnicity is something that is gotten from birth and (b) that the way of ethnicity is static and perpetual. Then again, ethnicity has been conceptualized as an instrument, a relevant, liquid, and debatable part of personality, a device utilized by people, groups, or elites to acquire some bigger, normally material end (Glazer & Moynihan,

1975; Rothchild, 1986). Ethnicity invariably serves as a medium through which people capitalized to achieve some other ends.

Having grasp the meaning of ethnicity it is expedient to avail the reader with what ethnic group is, a liberal researcher, Mair (1962) describe ethnic group as a people having the same verifiable experience, having the same tradition, using the same language and dialect and sharing the conviction about the future together. Other liberal scholars (Zolberg, 1968; Oyovbaire, 1974; Mitchell, 1987; Young, 1976; Stavenhagen, 1997) consider ethnicity to be an unavoidable result of modernization, political development and economic development, particularly in Africa. The liberal scholars trust that an ethnic group has membership of people who share a faith that they have basic interests and destiny, and they have a tendency to propound a social symbol communicating their cohesiveness. The composition of each ethnic group varies since they incorporate people from each phase of life and social class. Conversely, Weber (1968) for instance, described the ethnic group as "those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent." The main elements of ethnicity according to Nnoli (1980) include "exclusiveness manifested in inter-group competition, conflict in relation to stiff competition, and the consciousness of being one in relation to others." From the above submission by Nnoli it is evident that people ultimately use ethnic identity to have competitive advantage in situations of inter-ethnic competitions.

In most Nigerian societies, ethnicity tends to be assumed as "the employment and or mobilization of ethnic identity or differences to gain advantage in situations of competition, conflict or co-operation." (Osaghae, 1995:11). In such manner, the ethnic group is one "whose members share a common identity and affinity based on a common language and culture, myth of common origin and a territorial homeland, which has become the basis for differentiating 'us' from 'them,' and upon which people act" (Osaghae, 1995:12). As indicated by Nnoli (1978), "Ethnicity arises when relations between ethnic groups are competitive rather than co-operative. It is characterized by cultural prejudice and political discrimination". In this association, ethnic group turns into the flag under which the "game" of governmental issues and power is "played" by ethnic groups (Doornbos, 1991). Carved in the cognizance of numerous Nigerians, ethno-religious identity has demonstrated much stronger than national interests. Collectively or individually, the different and regularly warring ethno-religious groups in Nigeria give to a model of behavior that lifts ethnicity and



religion well beyond the more extensive interests of the country. Over and over, post-independence endeavors at nation building have been smothered by Nigeria's unpredictable ethno-religious arrangement (Agbibo, 2013). The point of view and approach for whatever remains of the article is that ethnicity is not a primordial component of African social orders but an instrument that is utilized to assemble and effectively appropriate power, political domination and secure resources, which ultimately leads to competition.

Proceeding onward, religion is another defining aspect of identity, but first we clarify its meaning. Egwu (2001) contended that religion is a very difficult subject of request including endeavors at its conceptualization and definition. Nevertheless, it is the conviction that there is an inconspicuous order, and that our incomparable good lies in agreeably conforming ourselves thereto. As indicated by Adeniyi (1993), religion is an assortment of truths, laws and rituals by which man is subordinated to the extraordinary being. This suggests religion manages standards and tenets, a conduct, process or structure whose direction is powerful i.e. radiated from God and which must be adhered to by the adherents. In another point of view, Ejizu (1993) opines that religion is man's instinct of the holy and extreme reality and his appearance of that mindfulness in solid life. In a comparable vein, Connelly (1946) characterizes religion in terms of consecrated and the spiritual. He declares that Religion begins with an attempt to symbolized arrangement, convictions, sentiments, imaginings and actions that emerge in reaction to direct experience of the consecrated and the spiritual. As this endeavor extends in its detailing and elaboration, it turns into a procedure that makes significance for itself on a managing premise, as far as both its beginning encounters and its own proceeding with reactions (Aleyomi, 2012). Religion could serve, and has for sure served as an instrument of social congruity in numerous civilizations. Incomprehensibly, be that as it may, it has likewise served as an inspiration for violence, consequently its indication in some writing as a 'twofold edged sword'(Maregere, 2011; Obasi, 2009). Furthermore, religion is another characterizing part of identity that scholars have contended can be utilized instrumentally to execute war in the same manner as others have consider the instrumental role played by ethnicity in conflict (for religion, see Iannaccone & Berman, 2006; for ethnicity, see Collier & Hoeffler, 2001). In the previous two decades, religion has been at the focal point of most violent clashes around the globe, in this way picking up reputation as one of the prime security challenges standing up to the world in the wake of the Cold War (Juergensmeyer 2000:6; Abu-Nimer 2000).

It is critical to note that the aspiration to implement effective community policing program become far more short-lived when issues of ethnic and religious identities are not properly addressed. As these identities play a pivotal role in determining citizen's participation intention in community policing program. Community policing divert attention regarding police engagement with the public via the rebuilding of the police organization, including adjusting operational works of the cops (Segrave & Radcliffe, 2004). Moreover, the primary core of community policing is partnership with community members, and the cops not only as law enforcers but also advice-givers, facilitators, and those that encourage community-based policing (Kumar, 2012; Segrave & Radcliffe 2004; Trojanowicz & Bucqueroux, 1990). Likewise, Anderson (2005) opined that, as of late consideration was attracted to another type of policing technique that is alluded to as community policing. To him the prior policing run of the mill of the 1950's made police to detach themselves from the community they serve, consequently, this development necessitated the need for community policing. Anderson further advanced that "one of the reasons community policing partnership continue to grow is because traditional policing activities have failed to deliver a substantial reduction in local crime rate". He contends further, that involving community members in crime prevention and management allow for a better approach to pinpointing and responding to neighbourhood concerns (with exhaustive advantages) ranging from enhanced police-resident relations to diminishing in the trepidation of wrongdoing.

Similarly, Dauda (2013) posit that community policing is a concept loosely employed nowadays, any sort of development to do with police and Community collaborations is presently called community policing. He advanced further that, the particular objective of community policing is that, the general population ought to play more dynamic and coordinated part in guaranteeing their security since the police can't hold up under the duty alone. Security is an excessive endeavor, and in this manner, a collective duty. To Casey (2010) community policing is both police operational technique and a theory that lay on the essential thought that policing ought to interface intimately with the community it serves, and that the model of "involving power" that disengage the police from the general population is by and large progressively rejected. She adds further that, overwhelmingly citizens support the model that permits officers to work in collective routes with people in general; this definitive state-focused model is being supplanted by the police with assent. Along these lines, for the community policing to succeed it



require a locally constructed methodology both in its configuration and operations in which collaborations is defined between the officers and the community in regards to policing needs.

Identity Politics and Conflict in Nigeria

As a socio-political idea, "identity" has both a personal and a group meaning: it is a "process located in the core of the individual and yet in the core of his community culture, a process which established, in fact, the identity of these two identities" (Erickson, 1968). As it were, it can basically be characterized as "a person's sense of belonging to a group if (it) influences his political behaviour" Erickson. It is said to be "constantly tied down both in physiological "givens" and in social roles..." Erickson. Its traits contain "duty to a cause", "love and trust for a group", "emotional attachment to a group", and in addition "obligations and responsibility" to the group to which an individual identifies. Identities become apparent when and if a person internalize them, and define his world around what was internalized (Castells, 2004). Albeit some self-definition can likewise match with social starring role, identities are more grounded wellsprings of importance than roles since identities sort out the meaning, while roles compose the function Castells. For most social performers, meaning is structured around essential identities (that is a personality that edges the other), which is self-maintaining over time and space (Lasch, 1980). However, identity is not the same for all people, neither is it stable for individuals. The significance and quality of identity changes among groups, and may vacillate extensively after some time. At the end of the day, while identity are pretty much fixed, identity awareness is likewise dynamic and moving mirroring the changing role of personalities and the uplifting or expanding greatness and outcomes of political issues regarding who gets what, when and how. Henceforth, activation, incitement and unsettling are vital to the arrangement of an imperative identity cognizance which, in turn, is basic to identity-based political issues. Likewise, at any given time, an individual may have numerous characters, each of which may dependably make them bear on his or her political behavior and social roles in the public arena (Okpanachi, 2010).

It is worthy to note that identities have historical significance in the Nigerian socio-political and even security process, during colonial as well as post-colonial administration. Under colonial administration, necessities justified the promotion and intensification of an "us" versus "them" disorder: Christian versus Muslim; Northerner versus Southerner; Yoruba versus Igbo versus Hausa-Fulani et cetera. Religious, sectional and ethnic contrasts were given unmistakable quality in

receiving and actualizing social, economic and educational development under the colonial indirect system prepared by the British (Agbibo, 2013). In this manner, the differential effect of expansionism set the background of the regional socio-political, educational lopsidedness which later become a significant platform for mobilization and control of identity consciousness. Keeping in mind the end goal to viably partition and govern, and in addition in the political issues of decolonization and in the field of aggressive political competition in the post-colonial era (Jega, 2000).

Ethnicity and religion are a portion of the numerous types of identity politics to which huge scholarly literary works attach in Nigeria. They are additionally the most basic identities in the nation (Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). But unfortunately, extant literature have been lopsided in their approach, given more preference to governance issues, while neglecting the impact of these variables on security parlance.

Nigeria with a population of around 174,507,539 people (CIA, 2013), is the most heavily populated nation in Africa. In Nigeria, there are numerous ethnic groups and dialects of at the very least 400 (Chinenye & Ogbera, 2013). The inhabitant of these ethnic group fluctuates greatly; the three biggest groups constitute more than half of Nigeria's whole populace while the eight biggest groups are right around a two third (Nnoli 1995). The populace divergence combined with their political influence informs the division of the ethnic groups into two-majority and minority cleavage. The dominant ethnic groups are Igbo in the southeast (18%), Yoruba in the southwest (21%) and Hausa-Fulani in the north (29%) (Paden, 2008). The various other ethnic groups constitute the minority class, with fluctuating degrees of political status, contingent upon their numerical size and political impact. Nigeria is also a multi-religious country with Muslim faithful's constituting 50% of the total population, Traditional religion 10% and Christian faithful's 40% (CIA, 2013; Country profile: Nigeria, 2008; Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey [NDHS], 2008). The Hausa-Fulani and different groups dwelling in Northern Nigeria are mostly Muslims while the south-south minority regions and Igbo talking territories in the southeast are transcendently Christians. The Middle Belt (or north-focal zone) is a blend of Christian and Muslim populaces, while the Yoruba-talking groups in the southwest are divided evenly along the two religions; Islam and Christianity. This separation brings about the North-South cleavage (as far as the North being overwhelmingly Muslim and the South dominantly Christian) and grooms



ethnic cleavages in the nation, particularly in the north, as Paden (2007) remarked, “the all-consuming nature of Islamic identity does eclipse other identities and religious differences play a major part in ethnic differentiation.” This mirrors the chronicled remarkable quality of Islam in the arrangement of the northern emirates in the mid nineteenth century, and the proceeding significance of emirs and religious commanding voices in keeping identities in the northern states (Lewis, 2007).

As indicated by Lewis (2007), an arrangement of normal suppositions has represented the examination of ethnicity in Nigerian political issues and society. In the first place, ethnic empathy is dared to be the most striking and predictable origin of social identity in Nigeria. Second, ethnicity is viewed as a gateway for collective activity. Third, ethnicity is thought to have the most destabilizing impact, with especially destructive impacts on social relations. A lot of implications can be gleaned from these premises. Since societal rivalry is poised along ethnic lines, both authoritarian and democratic administrations apparently have an ethnic character. Civil democracies probably inspire ethnic political parties to thrive, while military administrations are said to mirror an unmistakable sectional decision cluster. Structures of political control are additionally constituted ethnically, through clientele’s systems and support frameworks. As posited by Lewis, ethnic identity, within a context of competition over scarce resources, is seen as encouraging polarization and conflict.

Even though it is a common assumption that ethnic ID is ventured to be the most striking and predictable origin of social identity in Nigeria (Lewis, 2007), this regular presumption is defied by an investigation by the Pew Religious Forum which uncovered that religion, instead of ethnicity is the most notable identity in the nation (cf. PEW Forum on Religious and Public Affairs, 2006). Religion has dependably been vital in Nigeria and in Nigerian political issues (Enwerem, 1995). “The intensity of religious identity in Nigeria is regarded as one of the highest in the world” (Paden, 2008). This case is upheld by the way that Nigerians will probably classify themselves as far as religion than other identity. Undeniably, as per the authoritative May-June 2006 study on Religion and Public Life led by the Pew Forum on “Religion and Public Life”, around 76% of Christians affirm that religion is more essential to them than their native identity as Nigerians, Africans, or affiliates of an ethnic group. While among Muslims, the numeral naming religion as the most vital component is much higher (91%). As a result, Christian and Muslim identity have been the backbone of religious variation and

struggle, with a great deal of Nigerian Muslims more prone to manifest or lucid a religious identity than Christians (Lewis & Bratton 2000; Lewis, 2007). Fundamental to this profound religious identity is the profound distrust every group feels toward the other. As indicated by a Pew Survey, the majority of the nation's Christians (62%) say they trust individuals from different religions just a little or not in any way. A comparable rate of Nigeria's Muslims (61%) say they trust individuals of different religions little or not in the least (Ruby & Shah, 2007). Unfortunately, this deep-seated distrust among the varying religious adherents, extends to even law enforcements agents.

While the open deliberation about the identity most striking in Nigeria proceeds, what is clear however is that most times, ethnicity and religion infrequently exists or work in separation. Or maybe they cooperate with each other and also with different variables, for example, regional affiliation. It is in acknowledgment of this that the concept ethno-religious identity has been invented to show the inclination for the boundary between ethnicity and religion to blend amid moments of violence and conflict (Egwu, 2001). Fundamental to the comprehension of religion identity construction and its change from conflict to violence is the rise of religious fanaticism all through the nation. Radical groups show extensive narrow mindedness both towards their co-religionists and those from other religions. Fanatics of all religions respond to social, political and economic predicaments of the Nigerian community in religious terms (Mohammed, 2005). Despite the fact that Christianity and Islam have contributed emphatically to the development of the nation; they have additionally made a background marked of violence and conflict (Falola, 1998). This incorporates a war of words persuaded by clashing convictions: A great Muslim is one who can withstand Christian change strategies and crusades. A decent Christian is likewise one who can go up against Islam and test the Quran's power (Falola, 2001).

Clashes spurred by religious identity have the notoriety of being among the most obstinate, given the frequently absolutist perspectives to which they are tied. While adherence to conviction frameworks can build up a feeling of having a place and purpose, it can without much of a stretch lead to prejudice, discrimination, and brutal actions (Agbibo, 2013). Yet "religious clashes" need not be about religious transformation, and indeed for the most part have nonreligious causes. They are supposed in light of the fact that this is the unifying and assembling identity. As illustrated by Seul (1999), “Religion is not the cause of religious conflict; rather for many . . . it frequently supplies



the fault line along which intergroup identity and resource competition occurs” (p.558).

Religious Identity, Ethnic Identity, and Community Policing

Many numerous scholarships have explored the connection between ethnic identity and religious identity in relationships to the people engagement in social relations (Agbibo, 2013; Egwu, 2001; Lewis, 2007; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005). In this paper we specifically, proposes a nexus between religious identity, ethnic identity and community policing. This connection between religious identity, ethnic identity, and community policing has serious implications on citizen’s participation intention in community policing program in Nigeria. For example, a Hausa police officer from the Northern part of Nigeria posted to the Southern part of the country may have a problem of cooperation from the people he is to serve. In this assemblage, identity not only is restricted to how I see myself, it is at the same time a combination of how I see myself and how I am viewed by others. As the characterizing feature of people’s view of others, identity has profound political/social undertone (Agbibo, 2013). Identity stands in political and social relations is very essential since it serves as the “basis for inclusion and exclusion” (Harris & Williams, 2003). This creation of religious and ethnic identity has grave consequences for the citizen’s participation in community policing in a nation like Nigeria, where identity sentiments is tied to group affinity and loyalty. The result of this is that identity affiliation tends to supersede concern for security to which community policing is addressing.

As a determinant of people’s rights, identity of whatever gauss restricts who has access to positions, entitlements, opportunities, and even participation are basically hinged on the religion or ethnicity of the seeker (Abah & Okwori, 2002:24). It is against this scenery that some participants in a survey by Blanco-Mancilla (2002) in Kaduna state argue that Christians who are more suitable get unskilled jobs in relations to Muslims. As indicated by the participants, the segregation is based on religious and ethnic identity. Thus, people are discriminated upon due to their identities, law enforcement agents inclusive, this segregation has a great impact on citizen’s participation intention in community policing program. In the life of religious adherent, religion is a double-edged sword, it can perform as many things “act both as a strong identity and bond to social group and as a tool to legitimize power” (Blanco-Mancilla, 2002). As a key element of social relations religious and ethnic identities can, from one perspective, develop and boosts social relations whereas they can create an exclusive enclave, an obstruction that

determines whether a person has a place within a specific social circle. These identities also act as avenues through which adherents view and interact with the outside world. The adherents fashion their perspective of others by creating their sets of values, paradigm, worldviews, and meaning. Identities importantly defines how individual and group perceive themselves and others. Religion and ethnicity are unquestionably at the center of social relation in a deeply divide and religiously inclined country like Nigeria (Agbibo, 2003; Osaghae & Suberu, 2005).

Additionally, police discrimination against minority ethnic groups has been a perennial issue around the globe. For example, in Nigeria, police officer are accused of ethnic and religious bigotry, they are found to have taken side with their kinsmen, and shield them from the due process of the law (Agbibo, 2013). Similarly, in United States of America, white law enforcement officers have been blamed for profiling black citizens and their neighbourhoods (Lundman & Kaufman, 2003), expending uneven time and resources to investigate “black-on-white” rather than “black-on-black” crime (Eitle, D’Alessio & Stolzenberg, 2002), even discriminating black officers within their units (Barlow & Barlow, 2002). Thus, discrimination, has been found to obstruct citizens’ cooperation with the police officers and encourage distrust in government the more (Tyler, 2005). These problems are particularly common, and especially destructive, in countries with deep-seated sentiments and countries recuperating from civil war, like Nigeria. Ethnic and religious cleavages frequently remain highly prominent even after the war, and continued discrimination may further alienate citizens, reduce the seeming legitimacy of the state, constrain reconciliation, and worst still, amplify the threat of new civil war (Blair et al., 2016). The idea that ethnic heterogeneity impedes collaboration has been depicted as “one of the most powerful hypotheses in political economy” (Banerjee, Iyer, & Somanathan, 2005:639). Although some communities succeed in sustaining collective action despite high level of multiplicity, the unfriendly consequences of ethnic heterogeneity have caught the attention of research, and has been investigated across varied settings, including Kenya, Pakistan, Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal and India (Habyarimana, Humphreys, & Posner, 2009). The situations in those countries are not in any way different from Nigeria, a country with multi-ethnic and religious affinities.

Therefore, the nexus between ethnic-religious identity and community policing is glaring. The two identities have always serve as a benchmark for social relations in Nigeria, and community



policing expectantly is established to address neighbourhood security issues. These neighbourhoods are inhabited by different ethnic and religious groups, with their attendant sentiments. Furthermore, community policing entail supporting beat patrol officer to use his discretionary powers to tackle any security challenges that may crop-up, within his/her area of jurisdiction.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Thus far this paper examined the link between ethnic and religious identity politics and conflicts, and its associated implications on citizens community policing participation in Nigeria. Identity politics in Nigeria due to its inherent ideological dogmas such as parochial expressions, excitement and incitement of deepest possible emotional loyalty, which might lead to citizens' antipathy to community policing participation were exposed and deliberated. Furthermore, it was established in this paper that the underlying citizens' antipathy to participation in community policing program is a direct result of ethnic and religious identity politics. This politics has impelled and compel citizens to take side in everything they do, including law enforcement agents. Community policing program can only be successful in an atmosphere where multi-religious and multi-culturalism are guaranteed. Ethnic and religious diversity ought not to create barrier to human relations, let alone serves as impediments to successful community policing program. The Nigerian citizens should, therefore, comprehend the fact that ethnic and religious harmony and tolerance are both socially inevitable and legally sanctioned, as the world cannot be composed of one culture or religion (Sampson, 2012). Consequently, whereas every ethnic and religious groups can have an unhindered right to practiced their beliefs and customs, this practices must be done with reciprocal reverence for other citizens' rights to practice their own; on condition that such doesn't infringe on to the rights of others.

The desire to have a security collaboration and participation among citizens devoid of ethnic and religious sentiments in Nigeria rests on establishment and sustenance of mutual respect among the varied ethnic-religious groups. That can be achieved only through vigorous enlightenment campaign and educational praxis that would guarantee better orientation and culture of multi-religiosity and multi-ethnicity in our youth, couple with corresponding agendas of re-orientation of our adult populace. All religious and community leaders must be instructed to avail their members on the need for ethnic and religious harmony and to tolerate other people's faith and traditions, while also enlightening their members on the need to

partner with beat patrol officers irrespective of their ethnic or religious affinities. There is also the need to strengthened inter-ethnic and inter-faith exchange of ideas at all levels of governance to prevent occurrence of ethno-religious conflicts occasioned by ethnic-religious identity politics. Additionally, Sampson (2012) posits that "Nigerian Inter-Religious Council (NIREC), together with relevant Faith-Based Organizations and Civil Society Organizations should constantly engage in dialogue with various religious and ethnic communities, while also serving as a flat form for conflict analysis and early warning on violent conflict." Therefore, ethnic and religious conflict resolution must, above anything else, invention ways of eliminating ethnic and religious bigotry among citizens and police alike. It must similarly provide a footing that guarantees that the manipulations of religion and ethnicity by both religious clerics and politicians are drastically minimized if not completely eliminated.

It is equally important that, the police force should station police officer in a neighbourhood for a long period to enable him/her get acquainted and build confidence in the minds of the people. The police officers, especially the street corps (beat patrol officer) must establish an avenue for frequent interaction with the members of the public, to nurture mutual trust; re-orientation in terms of socializing is of utmost importance between the police and the public to solidify their relationship. Similarly, community members particularly the youth should be made to understand that partnership with the police is a mutually beneficial venture and that security issue is a collective responsibility. Police alone cannot secure their environment, the youth need to be adequately involved, it is time to find solutions to the insecurity in their neighbourhood collectively devoid of ethno-religious sentiments.

Only a democratic policing program (community policing) in which policy design and execution are govern by solid concern for partnership, consultation, and commitment to public interest can resolve the incessant security challenges in Nigeria. This democratic policing program is usually identified with virtuous governance. It is founded on a strong credence in the public views, and widespread participation, citizen involvement in community policing is characterized by a shared sense of responsibility in public policing. Ordinary citizens have strong say in the policing process, which enable the police hear diverse views on how best to tackle problems and take them into consideration during formulating policies and its implementation. The orientation of this policing empowers the public to use the program to improve their neighbourhood security. It involves an



unstructured interaction where the police influence the public and the public in turn influence the police. The people respect and trust the police, assist them, have faith in their capability in securing them, and above all collaborate and

partner with them in their routine struggle to improve their neighbourhood security. All these aforementioned tenets of community policing would not work in an environment tensed in ethnic and religious sentiments and discrimination.

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