THE EFFICACY OF COMMUNITY POLICING IN NIGERIA

LEONARD U. NGWU (Ph.D)
Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Enugu State
University of Science and Technology
(ESUT), Enugu State
E-mail: ngwuleonard@yahoo.com,
Phone No: +2348039632720

&

CHUKWUNKA CLEMENT AHURUONYE
Criminology and Security Studies Department
National Open University of Nigeria
Jabi-Abuja
E-mail: chukwunka@noun.edu.ng,
Phone No: +2348032353491

Abstract
The study focused on the concept of community policing and its effectiveness in ‘order maintenance, crime prevention and fear reduction in the community as opposed to the traditional focus on prosecution of serious street crimes based on ‘jungle justice’. The study highlighted the performances of both the formal security agent (the police) and the informal security agents (the Neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups). This paper, therefore, reviewed the activities of each of the security agents, using the synergy of communitarian theory of community policing and the democratic theory of community policing as the theoretical base. The paper mainly utilized secondary source of data from the existing literature, including books and journal articles as well as the Focus Group Discussion (FGD). The paper revealed that police corruption, brutality, insensitivity, high-handedness, extortionist tendencies, rudeness, ignorance among others, and on the part of the informal groups deviating from their original duty schedule by taking unilateral actions, such as, meddling with husband/wife issues, aligning with politicians to unleash terror on their political, business or other opponents in the community, debt collectors, et cetera. The former (police attitude) resulted in lack of co-operation with the police and the public in giving the police information on crime situation in their respective communities. Despite these limitations, community policing is imperative in maintaining safety and crime-free society in Nigeria. In this regard, the paper advocates for the establishment of informal cum formal security apparatus in all streets, communities and towns (where possible) as the safest method of crime prevention, fear reduction, greater satisfaction and involvement by the citizens, cordial community-police relations, social cohesion, flow of information from citizens and enhanced quality of community life.

Keywords: The Efficacy, Community Policing in Nigeria.
INTRODUCTION
MEANING OF COMMUNITY POLICING
The Meaning and Origin of Community Policing:

Community policing is a service oriented style of law enforcement that focuses on order maintenance, crime prevention and fear reduction in the community as opposed to the traditional focus on prosecution of serious street crimes (jungle justice) (Albanese, 2001). It is a comprehensive set of principles that has implications for policy philosophy, strategies and tactics. According to this perspective, community policing represents a merger of community-oriented-policing and police-oriented-policing.

The concept, “community”, according to Hillery (in Dambazau, 2012) has multiple meaning and definitions but concluded that all they held in common was a reference to people, having at least, one of these three elements, (a) communities based on geographical areas; (b) social interaction among the people, and (c) the people have some common tie, such as, social life, a consciousness of their homogeneity, or common norms, means or ends.

More so, “community” may be referred to as neighbourhood in which people live, or a group of people with common identity, such as race, ethnicity or religion; or refer to people with common profession, interests, or needs, or based on rural or urban experience. Whereas the concept “policing” is all about the security of people; who resides within a particular geographical location (clan, village, town, city, state or nation); with a common interest of protecting their lives and property; and who have identified that certain acts are reprehensible to community well-being. Community, in the context of policing is said to be, a geographical entity, with identified population, which may or many not be homogeneous, sharing common security interest (Dambazau, 2012). In Nigeria, for example, some communities are culturally homogeneous, others are heterogeneous, but generally, Nigeria is a multi-religious, multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society, et. cetera and they are all important for the concept of community policing. Subsequently, whether community groups are created by circumstances or by choice, people have fundamental expectations from their communities such as, freedom from fear and a desire for a better quality of life which is translated into the concept of security.

ORIGIN OF COMMUNITY POLICING

Community policing philosophy has been rapidly spreading worldwide as a result of a shift in emphasis for traditional policing, which is directed towards deterring crime and apprehending suspects, to one that is focused on police-community partnership in solving the problem of crime in society. This idea started in the United States in the early 1970s when it was found that individuals and neighbourhood groups were capable of contributing to their own security. This period witnessed such programmes like, neighbourhood watch, home security, personal safety training et cetera. In his own view, Ugwuoke (2015) maintained that the modern idea of community policing first developed in America and Europe at the dawn of 1980s when it was increasingly realized that the best way to ensure a comparatively crime free society was to establish a joint co-operation between a professional police service and a responsible public. Although, the modern idea of community policing is recent in Nigeria, the original philosophy is however, not a recent development.

According to Box (1998), the 1980s brought about what he referred to as a “resurgence of communitarian sensitivity to the responsibility of local residents for taking care of their own problems.” This, however, continued Box (1998), brought about the idea of community policing in the United States, a philosophy that is fast spreading in other parts of the world (Nigeria inclusive).

PRE-COLONIAL COMMUNITY POLICING OUTFITS IN NIGERIA

Except as a modern concept, community policing has been an old practice within the traditional Nigerian communities in which the prevention and control of criminal behaviour were matters best handled by the kinship and the extended family system. In those periods, respect for community elders, its ancestors and the adherence to its religious virtues were solidified by the structure of communal solidarity. There was collective responsibility in which “the family (or entire community) is collectively responsible for the conduct of its members to outsiders and each member of the family is responsible for his own conduct within the family (Dambazau, 1994). In other words, the communities through the elders, ancestors, and religious deities policed themselves with the synergy of the Neighbourhood Watch/Vigilante groups.

Thus, Chukwuma (in Ugwoke, 2015) observed that before the advent of British colonial rule, the various ethnic nationalities that make up Nigeria had some form of community based policing. Earlier on, (Rotimi, 2001) had noted that in pre-colonial Nigeria, there was organizations of body of men that played the role of policing various communities. Rotimi observed that in the Yoruba kingdoms, the Ilare, the Eniese
and the Oguren represented in the eyes of the populace, the symbol of legitimate force that not only apprehended and arrested criminals, but also executed the commands of justice. Among the Northern Emirates of Zaria and Kano, Rotimi also observed that there was the Dogari, a body of men drawn from the class of palace slaves whose duties among others included those of arresting and disciplining offenders and guarding the various communities. In Igbo ethnic group, according to Ngwu (2014), the various age-grade from the age of 18-30 also form themselves into Neighbourhood Watch/Vigilante groups to perform similar functions as mentioned above.

POST-COLONIAL COMMUNITY POLICING OUTFITS

The current initiative of community policing in Nigeria appears to be that of the Nigeria police as part of their “eight-point strategy for combating crime” (Sunday Sun, Lagos, August 1, 2004, p.2) and later expanded to a ten-point programme of action. This could be viewed as an attempt by the police to regain the public confidence, mend fences, and make the Nigeria public a partner in crime prevention and control.

Chukwuma (2004) observed that community-policing in Nigeria received a legislative backing only in 2004 following a keynote address delivered at an interactive forum on the review of the Police Act organized by the National House of Representative Committee on Police Affairs in collaboration with the Foundation for the Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria (CLEEN) (2005) and the Open Society- Justice/ Initiative (Chukwuma, 2004). Also, the former speaker of the National House of Representatives, Alhaji Bello Musari had in the address observed that as a result of the world wide acceptability, the concept of Community-Policing has received in recent years, the National Assembly has no option in granting it a legislative backing.

From the foregoing, according to Ugwuoke (2015), it has become obvious that although, community-policing has acquired a plethora of definitions, it is essentially concerned with delivery of police service through community-police co-operation with emphasis on the identification and careful solution of social issues that have direct bearing on the security of the society. The conceptual analysis of community policing therefore, recognizes the importance of incorporating a professional police service with the efforts of a responsible public as the most effective strategy for a comparatively crime free society. As William Lyons (2005) has aptly observed, the conceptual foundations of community policing range from nostalgic image of the police and of communities to management strategies, to visions of communities strong enough to police themselves.

THE PROBLEM:

Crime is one of the major social problems facing Nigeria today. The manifestation of this is evident in that no day passes without the national dailies carrying report of one form of crime or the other, ranging from murder, forcible rape, aggravated assault, child sexual abuse, political assassination, kidnapping, armed robbery, burglary, motor vehicle theft, oil pipe line explosion/bunkering by the militants groups, Boko Haramism, cybercrimes, child trafficking, et.cetera. For example, reports abound of armed robbers using dynamites and hand grenades to blow up the doors of bullion van conveying money with full police escort or using rocket propelled grenades to attack helicopters (Soyombo, 2009). Similarly, kidnapping which used to be a localized problem in some communities in Nigeria has assumed a national character, now, targeting the rich and the powerful who are now living in grave fear and uncertainty.

As a response to the security challenges in the country, many communities and neighbourhoods, governments, et.cetera, have made increasing recourse, to formal and informal security providers, such as community policing, Community Based Security/Neighbourhood Watch/Vigilante group structures to improve their safety and security conditions. Reports indicates that as high as 50% of Nigerians patronize the services of these community based security operatives for their protection from criminal attacks (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2005).

Some of the states in Nigeria, particularly, Enugu State government have openly endorsed armed vigilante groups as part of their campaign against crime (Amnesty International, 2002; Akinyele, 2008). Recently, the Governor of Plateau state was reported to have encouraged various communities in the state to organize Neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups in the light of the frequent invasion of these communities by extremists. Also, in Lagos State, three forms of formal, Community- Based or informal security groups with distinct structures and modus operandi are identifiable. These are (a) state organized, (b) those that are collective initiatives of the community members through their leaders, and (c) those that are engaged by individual house owners and/or residents; yet, crime rates have not abated. It is against this backdrop that the delivery of safety and security is considered a justifiable public service to be provided by the joint efforts of the communities and state (Lubuva, 2004).
OBJECTIVES:
Among other things, this study sets out to appraise public opinion regarding the performance of Community-Policing Neighbourhood watch/vigilante group in controlling crime in contemporary Nigeria society.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION:
Community Policing: Community policing in this context is defined as service oriented style of law enforcement that focuses on order maintenance, crime prevention and fear reduction in the community as opposed to the traditional focus on prosecution of serious street crimes (jungle justice). Community policing represents a merger of community oriented and police-oriented policing. In other words, it is the forging of partnership with residents, business owners, community leaders, government departments and agencies in order to solve community problems.

Neighbourhood Watch/Vigilantism: Neighbourhood watch/vigilantism in the context of this study is viewed as programmes involving citizens in effort to prevent crime in their neighbourhood or community. This practice encourages citizens’ patrol and victim support services. In this regard, a community or street leader is appointed, who in turn reports to the central coordinator. The central coordinator serves as a liason officer between the outfits and the Divisional Police Officers. These groups are traditionally/communally legitimate force that are not only permitted to apprehend and arrested criminals but execute the commands of justice.

Efficacy: Efficacy in this study is considered as the ability to produce a desired amount of a desired effect. In other words, it is the ability to have effect on something or bring about the result intended of reducing the incidence of crime such as, order maintenance, crime prevention and fear reduction in the community.

Jungle Justice: Is viewed as a place where people behave ruthlessly unconstraint by law or morality and by not being just and fair to criminal suspects.

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE
Siegel (2007) quoting Rational Choice Theory observed that “crime prevention, or crime reduction, should be achieved through policies that convince potential criminals to desist from criminal activities, delay their actions or avoid a particular target. In his work, Defensible Space (Newman in Siegel, 2007) maintained that, “criminal acts will be avoided if potential targets are guarded securely; the means to commit crime controlled and potential offenders carefully monitored.” Only irrational people would attack a well-defended, inaccessible target and risk strict punishment.

C. Ray (in Siegel, 2007) in his work, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Designs, posits that, “mechanism, such as, security system, deadbolt locks, high intensity street lighting, and neighborhood watch patrols should reduce criminal opportunity.” Similarly, Richard, et. al. (1986) demonstrated their point through the “vicious circle of the collapse of consensus policing.” They argued that evidence from Victimization Studies and other sources shows that over 90 percent of crimes known to the police are notified to them by the public (in Haralambos, 2013). Also, most crimes that are cleared up were solved as a result of information received from the public. However, research suggests that public confidence in the police has declined, particularly, in the inner-city areas and among members of the minority ethnic groups. As trust breaks down between the police and some sections of the public, the flow of information from the victims of crime dries up.

Thus, lacking the necessary information to solve crime, the police resort to new policing methods that includes stop and search tactics. This new tactics usually involve large numbers of people in an area, and it leads to the mobilization of bystandanders. Even those who are not directly involved with the police come to see police officers as part of an alien force intent upon criminalizing local residents almost regardless of their guilt. As a result, a vicious circle is initiated and declining information leads to more military style policing, while information provided by the public is reduced further.

Kinsey, et. al (in Haralambos, 2013) maintained that for the police to improve their performance and begin to clear up more crime; they must improve their relationships with the community so that the flow of information on which the police rely on increases. Kingsey, et.al., see little role for stop-and-search policy, because it antagonizes the public with the police, hence, the police rarely discover crime. In such situation, the police may spend as much of their time as possible investigating crime. Kinsey, et al (1986) (in
Haralambos, 2013) believed that, if the police act in these ways, they can regain the trust of the public and become more effective in clearing up the crimes that are of most public concern.

More so, according to Alemaika (2004), the sudden exist of the military from power and the rundown police force that they bequeathed to the civilian regime made it impossible to cope with crime upsurge in the country. To fill the gap, people formed neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups. The primary reason for setting them up was to protect the people from incessant raids by armed robbers in their neighbourhoods. This was captured by CLEEN (2005) (formerly known as Centre for Law Enforcement Education) who observed that “Local Communities across Nigeria, as in many other countries in Africa and elsewhere, have created their own informal or sometimes formal structures to try to ensure the security of the population.” These groups have usually been composed of individuals from the local community. The informal groups derived their credibility, and unofficial authority from the community in which they serve. One other purpose of these initiatives has been to complement the efforts of the police in identifying and handing over criminal suspects to the appropriate judicial authorities. Invariably, these groups sometimes, tries to settle their conflict between individuals in the community (Alemaika, 2004). The neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups rose to the challenges of combating the spiraling crime waves across many cities in the country, especially, in the early years of democratic transition. Neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups appears as a complementary to an existing well-organized and democratic police apparatus.

Democratic Theory of Community Policing

Swapna (2010) believed that Democratic theory of community policing rests on the premise that community policing “… involves the empowerment of a new level of social organization to generate work for the police, namely, groups, neighbourhoods, communities, businesses, civic groups et. cetera. The theory also maintain that the success of a democratic government depends on the voluntary compliance of citizens with society’s laws and norms of conduct. Bayley (2005) posits that, “the essential features of democratic policing are responsiveness and accountability.” According to him, democratic police force “is the one that responds to the need of individuals and private groups as well as the needs of the government. Strengthening of these mechanisms will strengthen the quality of democratic policing. He maintained that the problem countries face is that democratic policing, especially, in its concern with human rights and accountability, is under attack all the time because of reported increases, firstly, in serious crime and secondly, in terrorism, assassination, and collective disorder. When there are increases in individual and collective threats to law and order democratic policing become vulnerable to being labeled a “soft strategy”.

Participatory Democracy Theory of Community Policing

Ramaswamy (2004) argued that if individuals have an opportunity to directly participate in decision-making at the local level, they can achieve real control over the course of their everyday life. Similarly, Deliberative democracy signifies a democratic system ‘that deliberates to the extent that the decisions it reaches reflect open discussion among the participants with the people ready to listen to the views and consider the interest of others, and modify their own opinions accordingly’. In deliberate democracy, decisions are taken wholly by consensus. It values the manner of open discussion that hears all points of view and reaches a decision. Thus, community policing is based on the belief that members of a community can lead a peaceful and orderly life only if they directly participate in the community policing activities.

Involvement of public in police activities, which is an essential prerequisite for CP, breeds a sense of belongings. Periodic meetings between the public and the police at various levels serve the purpose. The sense of participation in policing helps the public to appreciate the problems of the police and policing. It encourages citizens to partake in nation building and boosts patriotism.

Zero Tolerance Theory of Community Policing

Wilson and Killing (1989), in their Journal: The Atlantic Monthly in March 1982 maintained that “just as an unrepaired broken window is a sign that nobody cares and leads to more damage; minor incivilities – such as begging, public drunkenness, vandalism and graffiti — if unchecked and uncontrolled, produce an atmosphere in a community in which more serious crime will flourish. According to this theory there exists a link between minor disorderly behaviour and rise in crime. Such disorderly behaviour would create a public perception that no one cares and everything goes. If such insignificant infractions of law are tolerated, it fosters a climate of permissiveness for major crime. But by pursing minor crime vigorously, the authorities can create an environment in which crime of more dangerous kinds cannot flourish (Jafa, 2001). However, critics argue that zero-tolerance policing is a form of aggressive policing that contains the danger of overreaction from undue enthusiasm for achieving results, or from deliberate brutality of an arrogant sense of
power. It is a punitive approach to maintaining law and order. This is the form of policing in which petty offenders are targeted directly and fed into the criminal justice system by arrest or summons as evidenced in Nigerian prison.

Communitarian Theory of Community Policing

Amitai Etzioni (2006) posits that “communitarianism” is an attempt to nurture an underlying structure of “civil society” - sound families; caring neighbours; and the whole web of churches, rotary clubs, block associations, and non-profit organizations that give individuals their moral compass and communities their strength. Communitarian theory of community policing believes that the deteriorating trend of the quality of community life is not just because the elected political representatives have done a bad job but also because they have not attended to what citizenship is all about. As such, communitarians support processes such as problem solving, where neighbourhoods have taken matters into their own hands, closing off streets and creating other physical barriers to disrupt the drug trade, working to overcome problems of homelessness, panhandling and so on. This is where the objectives of communitarians overlap with those of advocates of community policing; the recognition that many of the answers to community problems lie not with the government, but in the community at large (Peak and Glensor, 1996).

Communitarianism believes that rights come with responsibilities. According to communitarians, communities are posited as having moral value in the way that individuals do: communities have rights; individuals have obligations to communities as well as to each other. Communitarianism stands for the protection of “common good” and community policing is also a communitarian “justice” program that expands the role of the police from a constitutional jobs of protecting individual rights into a more progressive definition based on protecting the “common good”.

Communitarian theory of community policing maintains that the individuals are shaped by the communities to which they belong and thus owe them a debt of respect and consideration and tend to cooperate with the law enforcement agencies which assure them of peace and order in their respective communities. Communitarian theorists such as Alasdair Macintyre, Micheal Sandel, Charles Taylor and Micheal Walzer hold a similar view when they argue that individuals acquire their identities (their values, their projects, their social roles, their conventions, their hopes and fears) from the communities in which they live their lives (Hudson, 2003). According to this viewpoint, the people have the responsibility to fight crime and they need to actively participate in doing so.

Communitarian theory of community policing considers western life as a vicious spiral in which community decline leads to lack of informal social control which leads to a rise in criminal and anti-social behavior which further leads to demoralization and decline of community. Communitarian politics has thus brought forth zero-tolerance policing and full-enforcement criminal justice before it is too late, hence, people become the “eyes and ears” of the police. On the whole, the present theory holds that community strategies along with policing strategies can result in positive and effective responses to local demands. More precisely it can be said that community is what control strategies that are intended to restore, and community is simultaneously the resource by which control is to be effected.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The paper was anchored on the synergy of Communitarian Theory of Community Policing (Amitai 2006; Hudson (2003); Taylor (2001); Sandel (1998) and the Participatory Democracy Theory of Community Policing (Ramaswamy, 2004). Whereas, communitarian theory advocates for the nurture of an underlying structure of “civil society” with sound families, caring neighbour et. cetera that gives individuals their moral compass and community strength. Communitarians support processes such as problem solving where neighbourhoods have taken matters into their own hands by creating facilities to overcome problems concerning the community. This is where the objectives of communitarian theory overlap with those of advocates of Community Policing. Communitarians believes that rights come with responsibilities and moral value as they have rights and obligations. There is also the protection of the ‘common good’ as well as justice. Thus, the individuals acquire their identities (their values, their projects, their social roles, their conventions, their hopes and fears) and they have the responsibility to fight crime because they actively participate in doing it.

The Participatory Democracy Theory: Ramaswamy (2004), believes that “if individuals have an opportunity to directly participate in decision-making at the local level, they can achieve real control over the course of their everyday life. Thus, the deliberative democracy signifies open discussion among the participant with the people ready to listen to the views and consider the interest of others, and modify their
own opinions accordingly. Decisions were taken by consensus and values that manner of open discussion that hears all points of view and reaches a decision. Thus, community policing is anchored on the belief that members of a community can lead a peaceful and orderly life only if they directly participate in the Community Policing activities.

These theories underscores the need to give control of affairs and decisions to people most affected by the problem and serves as a means of getting things done. According to Arnstein (1969), it allows for the redistribution of power that in turn enables the have-nots presently excluded from the political and economic processes to be deliberately included. In this regard, people gain skills in assessing needs, setting priorities, and gaining control over their environment (Kreuter, et al., 2000) by incorporating local values and attitudes.

The aptness of this theoretical orientation is underscored by the increasing realization that no government or authority has the means to solve all the public problems adequately, and in the case of security, that the local people as stakeholders on their communities not only understand their neighbourhoods better, but share the common aspiration of promoting and protecting their communities. Effectiveness of this method of security operation abounds in areas where such groups were or had been formed. For example, the Civilian Joint Task Force, a state sponsored civil/Neighbourhood Watch/vigilante group to fight Boko Haram Terrorists in the North-Eastern Nigeria who are lashing mayhem on the people; the Bakassi Boys that existed in 1990s and 2000s in Onitsha, Aba, Owerre, etc., Neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups in Enugu state, etc. Hence, the Communitarian and Democratic Theories of Community Policing are relevant to this study, considering the fact that we have about 70% of our population living in rural area of Nigeria nation.

CHALLENGES NECESSITATING COMMUNITY POLICING

The need for community policing arose when the police were deemed corrupt and inept by the wider society. People decided to take measures into their own hands to either protect themselves or seek revenge. For some, it means involvement in private security; caged or prison-like residence with high fences as could be seen in most Nigerian cities; and for others, it means either a return to traditional forms of justice (use of deities against suspects/culprits) or carrying out “jungle justice” (Dambazau, 2012).

Sometimes in the past, President Olusegun Obasanjo, “indicted law enforcement agencies, especially, the police for aiding and abetting organized crimes.” According to the report, the President became worried by the manner in which the police hire their guns to (armed) robbers (The Punch, August 11, 2004, Lagos, p.1). Similarly, in an interview conducted by the author (Dambazau, 2012) in Abeokuta Prison in 1987, a condemned armed robber stated in his own words that:

…the guns the armed robbers are using, who are supplying them? Police sometimes, say armed robbers forcefully took the guns from them, it is a great lie. This is what we call top secret… for a pistol used in one business, you can give the owner one thousand naira. He can be a corporal or any rank… and not to talk of sub-machine guns and others… when in some operations, we can make up to about two hundred and fifty thousand naira, they (the police) have up to fifty thousand naira share on it…

Similarly, according to a participant in an Focus Group Discussion (FGD) session observed that: There are some special forces that facilitates the increasing seriousness of crimes in Nigeria which also to an extent, determine the degree of its uniqueness. This is the collusion between the criminals and some members of the law enforcement agents the police, para-military agents and high profile individuals of dubious characters. This is a direct reflection of break-down in moral rectitude and social decays at all levels of the society.

In another instance, a newspaper Editorial, The Guardian, March 20, 2005 reported that Joan Schneider of the United States office established to Combat and Monitor Trafficking in Persons, indicted, “government officials, particularly, the police for facilitating the trafficking of women and children” (The Punch, August 11, 2004, Lagos, p.16). Furthermore, The Guardian, September 23, 2005, Lagos, p.10) posits that due to police behaviour in Lagos, both the guilt and innocent are afraid. For this reason, the innocent has the “additional burden of fear foisted on him by a tyrannical, brutal, greedy men in police uniform.” Thus, considering the ‘police mentality’ coupled with ‘Nigerian factors’, the police have the same manner of handling the innocent public which resulted to the hatred the public have for the police all over Nigeria.

Quoting a victim of police corruption in Lagos who referred to the latest police slogan of more ruthless “fire for fire”, which means “To serve and protect with integrity”, The victim concluded that, “…
no one can equate the high-handedness, insensitivity, drunkenness, extortionist tendencies, rudeness and ignorance that some police men on the road exhibit with the noble virtues of service and integrity (The Guardian, September 23, 2005, p.10).

Stressing further on the above views, Dambazau (in Ugwuoke, 2015) opined that:

“poor police-community relations adversely effect the ability of the police to maintain law and order. Also, lack of confidence in the police has made people generally hostile, and this makes them unlikely to come forward in order to report violations of law, even when they are the victims.”

In other words, people are unlikely to report the movement of suspicious persons or incidents, to testify as witnesses, or to provide any vital information on crimes. In fact, there were instances in which people refused to report traffic accident or convey accident victims to hospitals for the fear of police attitude (Dambazau in Ugwuoke, 2015). The above revelations have provided a clear evidence to the fact that the apparent failure of the police to protect lives and property and indeed checkmate crime generally in Nigeria can be largely attributed to the lack of trust between members of the police force and those of the public (Ugwuoke, 2015).

THE “BAD EGGS” THEORY

Among the challenges necessitating community policing is the contributions of the “Bad Eggs” who undermine the efforts of the Nigeria Police Force to create cordial police-public-relations and trusts. The advocates of the “Bad eggs” theory believed that in every occupation (policing inclusive), there are bound to be some members who are willing to cut corners, commit dishonest or criminal acts in pursuit of some personal gain. According to Jennifer 0’cnnor in (Dambazau, 2012), the violators had more difficult getting along with others; had more delinquent histories; and more indications of maladjustment, immaturity, irresponsibility, and/or unreliability; whereas, the non-violators tend to be more tolerant of others; willing and able to maintain long-term positive relationship with others; willing to accept responsibility and balance; and/or controlled by guilt and remorse.” (Jennifer in Dambazau, 2012).

In the process of the existence of these “Bad eggs” in the neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups, local leaders have on several occasions, abuse their powers and tend to use these informal security agents for other purposes (Alemika, 2004). For instance, the acclaimed success of the Bakassi Boys in reducing crime in Aba, Anambra, Imo, et cetera, soon won the admiration and goodwill of the people. As time go by, these vigilante groups in most cases deviated from their original schedule of duty for which they were formed by engaging in other activities such as settling civil matters, recovering debts, ejecting tenants for landlords and in some cases meddling with husband/wife matters, and serving as ready hands to unleash violence during elections. By using them for revenge against political opponents, settling scores with their enemies in the village - all somehow made the informal groups as being partial or bias.

In some communities where the traditional leaders, politicians, and/or other influential citizens use these neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups to unleash mayhem on their opponents in the community, the people reacts in tendem by regarding these categories with suspicion and fear. In this regard, the informal security groups which seek to provide ‘due process for arrested criminals’ are to be distinguished from those ‘Bad eggs’ which operates as a bunch of death squads that mete out jungle justice on their victims. Several literatures focused on the excess of some informal security groups involved in crime control in most communities where they exist (Ajayi and Aderinto, 2008; Alemika, 2008; Akinule (2008); HRW and CLEEN (2002). Akinule (2008), for example, observed that, “… the usefulness of the OPC in Oshodi and Mafoluku part of Lagos is currently being called to question by the residents of the area.”

First, it is alleged that thieves and the ‘bad egg boys’ have infiltrated the ranks of the OPC to an extent that the OPC has become part of the problem rather than the solution to the crime wave in Oshodi and Mafoluku. Second, armed robbers use the strategy of posing as OPC guards to rob their victims by calling on them to come out at night to identify fictitious household members. Alemika and Chukwuma (2004) also reported that there have been incidents in the past whereby a compliant of stealing was brought against members of other forms of informal policing groups. These groups are manifestation of the ‘Bad eggs theory’ of which the Bakassi Boys, some other Neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups were part of and are guilty of intimidations, suppressions and unilateral activities against the poor and weaker members of their communities.

In elucidating the above views, member of a group of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) session, said:
The informal security outfit, in some of the communities were usually involved in jungle justice and victimization of innocent citizens. This is done as a revenge for one thing or the other and sponsored by the most powerful in such community who hire and paid them to do such dirty work. It could be land dispute, or struggle for economic or business deal, et cetera. Sometimes, the informal group try to settle dispute between individuals with bias and/or meddle with family matters, including husband and wife dispute or as debt collectors.

Another woman participant in Focus Group Discussion (FGD) session argued that:
There is the tendencies for the groups to be used by politicians to intimidate their political opponents out of political race or complete assassination. In a similar vein, some of the police officers conive and collude with criminals. While the criminal gang operate in the western coast, the police patrol the eastern coast and wait for their own share of the exploit as the gang’s godfather, et cetera.

THE EFFICACY OF COMMUNITY POLICING IN NIGERIA

LaGrange (1993); Wilson, et. al. (in Lombardo and Lough (2007) believed that the major positive effects of community policing include:
- reduction of fear of crime, greater citizen satisfaction and involvement, improved police-community relations and social cohesion, improved flow of information from citizens, and enhance quality of community life.

LaGrange for example, maintained that the advocates of community policing draw their support from the “broken window theory”. This theory believe that, a broken window in an abandoned house, and the allowance of certain ‘harmless’ (but fear inducing) activities on the street naturally creates uncertainty and crime. Once the window is unattended to, the building is broken, or left un repaired, then, there is the tendency for the remaining widows to be broken as well. In a similar vein, the “unattended” behaviour can also lead to the broken down of community controls. According to this theory, community-policing can protect such social windows from becoming broken in the first place. In contrast, the existence of signs of neglect and decay in the neighbourhood (as in slum areas) can create serious crime conditions.

In this regard, community policing in Nigeria is capable of counteracting the military character which the police has acquired from the colonial experience and many years of military rule in Nigeria. The trend has resulted in the police brutality and in return created the hatred of the police by members of the public as well as lack of trust between the police and members of the public. Thus,

- For the fact that, community policing encourages joint partnership between the police and the community, it could restore the confidence of the public in the police and this would inevitably result in a more responsible and efficient policing of the various communities, streets and towns.
- It is pertinent to note as demonstrated above that the success of the traditional community policing strategies (Neighborhood Watch/vigilante groups) were largely based on the fact that members of the various guards are well known members of their respective communities who also reside in these communities, rather than, strangers policing strangers’.
- This traditional strategy is therefore, compatible with the modern idea of community policing, which seeks to ensure that members of the force are made to serve in their respective communities or at least, serve in communities where they are well known. For example, the proposed idea of establishing “state police” in Nigeria.
- Community policing also has prospects in Nigeria because it is compatible with the present upsurge in the formation and proliferation of Neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups, such as, Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in the Northerneastern Nigeria, Niger Delta Region etc especially, in the rural areas where most members of the group come from and avoid ‘strangers’ policing ‘strangers’ as was introduced by the colonial masters at the inception of the police force in 1930s which was however, incompatible with the traditional philosophy of community policing in Nigeria.

According to one of the participant in an FGD session:
Despite some limitations posed by the “Bad Eggs” in the informal security outfit, the informal security groups have done marvelously well in controlling the rise in crime. This is because, they were, and/or are very active in identifying new faces/ visitors in the community, while investigation is quickly conducted on the new person’s
profile. If his background is not clear, he/she will be asked to leave the community or be handed over to the police.

Through this method, it is very difficult for criminal gang to invade the community without an inside help. Hence, over 85% of the security members are well known and trusted members of the community. The participant concluded that, “if the police authority and community leaders should support and organize neighborhood watch/vigilante groups very well, it could prove to be the most active way of controlling crime in each community, streets in the cities, and the like, bearing in mind, their familiarities with each member of their communities as well as the terrains of the environment, et cetera. Hence, community policing that is made up of the police force and members of the community is a welcome development.

Similarly, in corroborating the above views, a participant in the FGD session opined that: None of the measures (the police, para-military security agents, etc) has helped to my satisfaction in the reduction of crime like the neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups. This informal security agents are those very close to where the source of the crime happens. Because this vigilante are made up with the inhabitants of the community, they are more familiar with the environment unlike when you call a police man that has no idea of the environment.

Another participant in an FGD session was of the opinion that:

If you want to control crime in a particular community, or street, give the leadership of the neighbourhood watch to a repentant criminal (if any) to control of criminals. By this involvement/commitment, he will encourage his boys to operate outside the areas entrusted to him. And if this method can be applied in almost all the communities, streets and towns, the intruders will be gradually warded off in the same way thereby reducing crime wave to the barest minimum.

Still on these views, a participant in an FGD session and one time a victim of armed robbery posits that:

The vigilantes are very effective in this case but we must look at the sophisticatedness of this neighbourhood watch. The government should up-grade them to the standard of fighting back the criminals such as, armed robbers. The Special Armed Robbery Squad (SARS) whom we thought have sophisticated weapons to fight armed robbers could not do so effectively. For instance, what happened around GTC Enugu where four banks were robbed one after the other, and what marveled me was that it took them almost four hours to finish the robbery. The question then was, where were those policemen that have the weapon? The individuals around called the police to report the incidence, but instead, a police man replied, “police no dey die?” after one hour of the robbery, police came into the scene, blaring their siren shouting, “which way did they go?”

Thus, the qualitative data exposed the justification for Neighbourhood watch as very effective in crime control in communities. For instance, one of the participant (a woman) and a victim of armed robbery in an FGD session said that:

One day, armed robbers were operating in the flat next to ours. And as soon as I understood what was happening, I became as still as a corpse because there was no escape for me and my husband travelled. What increased my fear was that I had no money in the house. However, their busting into our own flat and the sound of gun-shots outside coincided. Instantly, the robbers engaged in a brief gun duel with the Neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups and in the next minutes the robbers took to their heel.

Subsequently, a good numbers of the participants in an FGD session believed Neighbourhood watch/vigilante groups seems to be the most effective means the public or community can adopt to help reduce crimes in the society. This is because neighbours living in the same street or environment knows fairly better about the next door neighbour and could detect and report the suspected neighbour to the police.

**Conclusion**
The contemporary Nigeria Police Force is the brain-child of Colonial Administration which the colonial masters used for suppression, intimidation, to instill fear on their colonized subjects in order to maintain peace, order and social control. The police organization is the largest and most pervasive of the criminal justice agencies and also the most controversial. However, before the colonial invasion, there existed traditional community policing, in various communities occupying the territory known as Nigeria.

There are three major issues that greatly impacts on the activities of the Nigeria police. These are, first, police corruption which impacts on their ability to prevent and control crime. This is pervasive and inimical to the constitutional responsibilities of the police as it facilitates commission of crime, makes the public loose confidence on the police and governance in general, and creates sense of insecurity. Second, is the abuse of human rights, police brutality, penchant to use excessive force, and, third, the wide discretion exercise by the policeman, the impact of colonization and military rule, and the poor state of police administration and welfare; all these impacts on the quality of policing in Nigeria (community policing inclusive).

For a successful Community policing, the community, towns or urban planning should be well adhered to; avoid signs of neglect and decay in the Neighbourhood (as in slum areas), hence, this type of situation invites crime. Thus, the flexibility of the para-military security organization can easily be compatible with the flexible structure and management styles of community policing. This is predicated on the lapses of the para-military policing which was inherited from the colonial administration in Nigeria. Since the community policing is in line with the principles of democratic policing, it is expected that the current democratic dispensation in Nigeria will be supported and sustained by the community policing initiative. That is, “do it yourself policy” through which the indigenes combined with the police to do the policing.

Despite the lapses, the police as a proper and constitutional agency of crime control is looked upon for the success of community policing. It must therefore, be predicated on the recognition of the fact that while, the help of other agencies such as Neighbourhood Watch/vigilante groups is important in crime control, the police is the only agency empowered by the Nigeria constitution to control crime and to protect lives and property in the land.

**Recommendations**

The economic, social and political realities of Nigerian society forms the base for most of the problems associated with myriads of crimes in Nigeria. The existence of bad governance, mass poverty, growing sense of hopelessness, chronic unemployment and rampant corruption in the society are fuelling anti-social behaviour. However, the following recommendations have been advanced for effective community policing in Nigeria.

- There should be visible surveillance presence as a deterrent to criminal activities by increasing the offender’s perception of the risk of being caught. A proactive policing strategies, such as, intensive police and neighbourhood/vigilante patrol can instill fear into potential criminal in crime prone area.

- Neighbourhood watch/vigilante group programmes can help to reduce opportunities for crime. One way of doing this is to create signs of occupancy (such as, red-lighted-lanterns on the strategic positions in the community, street, etc; intermittent sounding of metal/wooding gong and other danger signs) indicating an invisible presence of people, particularly, security agents as well as activities indicating that the property is actively protected. Other home security measures (such as, fencing the house, security light, burglary proof protecting windows and doors, etc) could make it harder for criminals to gain access to the property. Also, when the property is marked with an inscription of initials, etc removes the benefits of theft by making it harder to dispose off stolen goods.

- A well organized and monitored Neighbourhood Watch/vigilante groups can promote social control by increasing community consensus, cohesion and confidence that they can address crime problems effectively.

- Increased police detection, supported by the community through giving information that may lead to the incapacitation of offenders since activities reported by citizens can help the police make arrests and gain conviction.

- In addition, the success of community policing must be based on unity of purpose and avoidance of ‘strangers policing strangers’. On the contrary, a community whose members are not united may not succeed in implementing community policing programmes because sabotage and/or an insider criminal network will undermine the apprehension of intruders and crime control.

- As for order maintenance role of the police, proper harmony between community norms (informal) and the state laws (formal) should be vigorously pursued. It is pertinent to note that veritable sources of our criminal law are predicated on our customs and traditions, since public fear stems more from disorder.
in the community than crime. In other words, when traditional norms and laws lose their value, disorder which brings about crime sets in, for example, crime and war.

- Similarly, through the efforts of community leaders, community institutions of social control (the youths, council of elders, Umuadas (i.e daughters married outside), shrine priests, town unions, the police and government) should be stringent in controlling the excesses of some of the informal crime control agencies who tend to abuse their duty schedule by involving themselves as “Bad eggs” in the crime control outfit. This control should be done through national policy guiding the operation of the informal crime control groups.

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