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NIGERIAN CENTRALIZED POLICE STRUCTURE AS AN ANTITHESIS OF COMMUNITY POLICING

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ABSTRACT

Community policing focuses on crime and social order through the delivery of police services that includes aspects of traditional law enforcement as well as prevention, problem solving, community engagement and partnership. It is a strategy developed to move from what has become “reactive” policing to preventive policing in which the police see themselves, and are perceived by the society as a force at its service not as an agency merely imposing law and order. However, the police structure in Nigeria does not precisely recognize community policing due to centralized nature of its structure. Thus, this article appraises the prevalent nature of centralized police structure in Nigeria to ascertain the effect of centralized structure on the operational needs of community policing in the country. It also examined the dispute over control of the police as well as its possible influence on the insecurity being experienced in Nigeria and; determined the prospects of non-centralized police structure. The objective is to provide information on police reforms centered on community policing that could enhance law and order maintenance as well as crime fighting. The article relied on secondary data and content analysis in analyzing the data. It is underpinned by the principle of subsidiarity.

Key Words: Structure; Community; Centralized; Antithesis and Police

Introduction

Nigeria is experiencing issues and controversies among the different levels on the different aspects of legislation. An important aspect where this controversy has become a commonplace in discourse is the area of policing functions and the control of the

country's police force (Adekanye, 2011). Nigeria operates a system whereby the power of legislation and control of formal police is centrally held. According to Kurian (2006) cited in Odeyemi (2016) since the first military takeover of government in 1966, the country has experienced the central government assuming full powers of control of police and policing functions. Prior to the 1966 coup, Nigeria operated a non-centralized system of policing structure in accordance with the existing ethno-regional structure of the federal system. Two of the three regions that make up the federation from 1958 to 1963—the North and West had a means of law enforcement operating within their areas of jurisdiction. These were called Native Authority Police Forces and Local Government Police Forces respectively. The 1960 Independence Constitution and the 1963 Republican Constitution established the maintenance of law and order in which all tiers of government shared a concurrent responsibility.

The status quo was however, altered by the coup of January 1966 along with the civil war that followed from 1967-1970. The military regimes abolished the shared jurisdiction that the constituent units had hitherto exercised in policing functions, given the central government exclusive powers (Odeyemi, 2016). The Aguiyi Ironsi regime placed all Local Government Police Forces and Native Authority Police Forces under the overall command of the Inspector-General in 1966, while the Yakubu Gowon regime subsequently established a single police force for the country (Asobie, 1989). The situation remained all through the years of military rule and was mirrored by the constitutions of 1979, 1989, and 1999 (Odeyemi, 2016).

However, since the return of civil rule in 1999, there have been calls from political and community leaders, civil society organizations and academia for a fragmented police system, in line with country's federal structure. This is to enable the component units undertake policing functions within their spheres of influence. This call is necessitated by the rising wave of insecurity, which has pervaded the country in the form of violent crimes, such as armed robbery, assassination, thuggery, kidnapping, disruption of public peace and terrorist acts. Insecurity has become a big challenge to the Nigerian polity, thereby necessitating the need for reforms of the security system in line with prevailing and international practices.

On the other-hand, a non centralized policing system will improve effectiveness in public safety in accordance with the model adopted in other federal societies like the U.S.A. and Canada. The prevalent global trend in crime-fighting and the realities of security challenges in Nigeria makes the fragmented police which will give constitutional backing to community policing pertinent. In addition to making it easier for the police to manage crimes, according to Ekweremadu (2012), it gives the police the benefit of knowing the terrain—geographically, culturally, socially, politically and commercially.

Moreover, having the understanding of the importance of community policing in crime control as is prevalent in the country, this paper examined the efficiency and effectiveness of the current policing system in crime fighting and law enforcement and ascertained the effectiveness of a centralized system of policing in Nigeria's federal society. The paper determined the prospects inherent in a fragmented policing structure and made a call for community policing as a desirable option within the context of the country's socio- political milieu which the centralization of policing structure as is obtainable at present is antithetical.

The Principle of Subsidiary

This paper is underpinned by the subsidiary principle. Closely related to the theoretical formulation of federal idea as espoused by K. C. Wheare is the principle of subsidiarity. Subsidiarity is a principle of government which prescribes that government need to delegate their powers, authorities and duties to the smallest jurisdiction or to the closet-to-the-citizens that can effectively and efficiently perform them. This is because federalism is a device for compromising unity in the face of diversity.

The notion of subsidiarity is linked to the ancient times and within the Roman Catholic Church with its social doctrine (Blank, 2009). It is derived from the Latin root *subsidiuum*, which means assistance in terms of the smaller matters of life. It was viewed as an approach to understanding the problem of modern societies as reflected in the broad understanding of human nature, social and governmental structures. This principle embodied the notion that the well-being of any society, to a reasonable degree is a function of the vibrancy and empowerment of individuals acting within a social or group setting, which in return encourages the tendency towards resolving problems at the local levels (Vischer, 2001).

Subsidiarity affirms that issue areas and political authority should only be exercised at the national state level if it is deemed necessary by the constituent units, and if the issue or political authority would better be dealt with at the national level. Otherwise, political authority should persist in the hands of the units which actually constitute society, or at more localized levels of political society. In other words, the principle is anchored on the idea of individual sovereignty; all other levels of societal organization are given a lesser role, taking up only those tasks and responsibilities that are beyond the ability of the individual (Friesen, 2005).

In the context of assignment of governmental functions, it suggests that powers and responsibilities should be assigned to the lowest level of government practicable. Its emphasis is on optimum local inputs into governmental decisions to ensure maximum responsiveness to local needs and preferences of the community. Political authority ultimately rests with the constituent units, and is only transferred to a federal/national

level if it is absolutely necessary. The principles offer a criterion for the rational allocation of the roles within federations between central and sub-national governments. It states that functions should be performed by the lowest level of government competent to do so effectively. This gives additional value to the principle of federalism in so far as powers should not be just shared between various levels, but be shared 'according to the criteria of efficiency, suitability and interest'. This principle emphasizes that a lower tier should not be responsible for exercising powers simply because the power was attributed to its level, but because it is in the interest of that tier to exercise it, and because the best and most efficient of this power is guaranteed by this tier. Subsidiarity increases the overall quality and effectiveness of the system of governance, while increasing the authority and capacities of sub-national levels (Aroney, 2015; Gamper, 2005).

In its classic form, the principle affirms "a community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of the society, always with a view to a common good". Aroney (2015) notes that this was adopted by the European Union in 1987 as a response to Member State perceptions of undue centralization within the European system of government; after making its first official appearance in the Single European Act signed in 1986, and acquiring definitive official status in the Maastricht Treaty which came into effect on November 1, 1993.

Effectiveness spreads risk and responsibility between levels of government, allowing for specialization, innovation and alignment with need; while efficiency avoids duplication and overlap of activity, thereby supporting an efficient allocation of government resources. It suggests that federations should operate systems with associated political accountability through levels of government where the expertise lies. In effect, the place of the subsidiarity principle in federations is anchored on the premise that a level of government that holds a better promise of adequate understanding of a particular issue in governance, and provision of public goods, should be allowed to address such an issue. This serves as a counterforce to the possibility of centrifugal and centripetal forces tending to over-centralize powers in federal systems (Smith, 2014).

The importance of subsidiary is hinged on some factors; in the first place, it is more receptive to the idea that there can be more than two types of recognized jurisdiction; secondly, it promotes a notion of positive autonomy or positive duties of central government towards the constituent units and even duties among the units themselves; and thirdly subsidiary is less married to principles of strict exclusive competences. Its biggest utility is the notion it brings forward that a 'higher' political body should take up only those tasks that cannot be accomplished by the 'lower' political bodies (Watts, 1999).

Subsidiary underscores efficiency and effectiveness of governance in federations in the sense that while powers of legislation are normally shared, duties within this power-sharing calculation should be performed by a level of government best suited to perform it. This can be related to this article in the sense that the guiding principle on which level of government should undertake a particular task should be based upon which level is best fit to perform such task. Thus, while power configurations vary across different federal societies, the unique circumstances of each society should provide basis for who undertakes tasks, and when such circumstances demand a concurrence of duties and responsibilities as is the case with policing duties, constitutional provisions should be made to take care of such. The question of who undertakes policing powers should be left to the level of government best suited to do it, and when socio-political circumstances and citizen-interest require a concurrence, such should be necessarily undertaken. In this case there is need for constitutional provision in Nigerian Constitution to legalize community policing which brings police and policing closer to the people and ensures synergy between the police and the people.

Characterizing Police, Policing and Police Administration in Nigeria

The police organization primarily undertakes the function of formal policing within Nigeria. The Nigerian Police Force (NPF) as presently constituted is associated with country's colonial history. According to Odinkalu (2004), the origin of Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is driven by a confluence of colonial, commercial, political and strategic interests. However, prior to colonialism traditional mechanism and structures had existed within the various autonomous cultures that later became Nigeria through which communities were protected. In essence pre-colonial Nigerian societies had persons rooted in the communities who were entrusted with police duties, helping to maintain law and order as well as general community development (Odeyemi, 2016).

Policing took a formal form armed and distinct from the civil society, and operated under the auspices, and serving the interest of the colonial government following the annexation of Lagos in 1861. The police developed from early constabularies raised to protect British personnel alongside the administrative and commercial interest after they assumed responsibility for the Port of Lagos. The British Consul charged with administration of Lagos established a Consular Guard in Lagos by the Police Act of 1861 to help maintain law and order and suppress protest and demonstration triggered by the imposition of British rule. In 1863, the thirty (30) member Consular Guard was renamed Hausa Guard, named after the ethnicity of the men recruited into the unit. It was further regularized in 1879 by an ordinance creating a "constabulary" for the colony of Lagos. Thus, the Hausa Guard became known as Hausa constabulary.

As the British expanded their operations, the size and reach of the force grew proportionately, and additional constabularies were formed to the interest of the

administration. These constabularies operated separately even after the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern until 1930 when they were merged to form the Nigeria Police Force with Headquarter in Lagos. At this period, most police were associated with local government (Native Authorities). The Native Authority Police came with the amalgamation of 1914 and managed by colonial surrogates, traditional rulers and native authorities (Chukwkuma, 2000). However, in 1943, the Northern and the Western Regions established their own regional police which operated into the mid 1960s. In the First Republic, these forces were first regionalized and subsequently nationalized into the Nigeria Police Force by the Military government in 1968 (Kurian, 2006). Thus, centralized police force in the country came into effect with the incursion of the military into governance. Ironsi and Gowon regimes initially paced all Local Government Police Forces and Native Authority Police Forces under the overall command of the Inspector General and later merged into a single police force. Since then successive military and civilian administrations in the country have operated with a single police force, accentuated by the 1979 and 1999 constitutions.

Provisions of the 1999 constitution (as amended) established a single police force for the country, with power of control over it strictly placed under the central government. Section 214 (1) provides that:

There shall be a Police Force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section, no other police force shall be established for the federation or any part thereof (FRN. 1999)

By the virtue of this constitutional provision, no other level of government is allowed to establish police forces of their own including the state. The 1999 constitution accords the president and commander-in-chief of the armed forces authority over the police hierarchy. The Inspector General of Police and by extension the entire police force is subject to policy and operational directives from the President. There is no restriction on the type of directive the President can give so long as it is seen as lawful and relates to maintaining and securing what is perceived as public safety and order.

Section 9 of the Police Act provides that:

The President shall be in charged with operational control of the Force, 9 (4); The Inspector General shall be charged with the command of the force subject to the directive of the President 9 (5).

What this implies is that the President exercises all powers in relation to use of the police. The implication of the foregoing in practice is that, while state governors are

chief security officers of their respective states, the extent to which they can put the police within the state command into use is subject to the prerogative of the President. And in agreement with (Obiyan, 2010), in situations where the positions of a state governor and the federal government have differed, especially where political differences exist, the polity has been awash with disputes and controversies. Moreover this constitutional provision of absolute control of the police institution by a tier of the government in a federal system is antithetical to community policing which depends on constitutional provision of lower tiers of police force particularly state police in a federal system.

This is because the notion of police and policing especially when viewed in the context of federal system is the idea of state police. Here, we mean a police formed, funded and maintained by a sub-national government of a federal state in line with constitutional provisions. According to Agwanwo (2014) it is a policing in federal system in which the state government employs police officers for the purpose of policing the state. However, the constitutional provision for this segment of policing is absent in Nigerian constitution which do not give room to the formation of any other police. Thus, section 214 (1) states; “no other police force shall be established for the federation or any part thereof”. This is in contrast to community policing which is important feature of federalism and also denies communities an essential aspect of policing which is vital for security of communities.

Administratively, in terms decision making and oversight, Alemika (2011c) notes that the leadership of the NPF can be located in three strategic leaders in the constitution:(i) policy leadership by the President in his capacity as the chairman of the Police Council (delegated to Minister of Police Affairs); (ii) human development leadership by the chairman of Police Service Commission; and (iii) operational leadership by the Inspector General of Police. The Inspect General (IG) is the strategic driver involved in bidirectional relationships with the other leaders. He or she translates policy inputs from the Police Council, Police Service Commission and the Ministry of Police Affairs into usable programs and guardians for the police managers to implement. The IG also provides inputs into the decision making of other leaders. Section 215 of the 1999 constitution provides that:

(1)There shall be (a) an Inspector General of Police who, subject to section 216 (2)of this constitution shall be appointed by the president on the advice of the Nigeria Police Council from among serving members of the Nigeria Police Force; (b) a Commissioner of Police for each state of the Federation who shall be appointed by the Police Service Commission. (2) The Nigeria Police Force shall be under the command of the Inspector General of Police and contingents of the Nigeria Police Force stationed in a state shall, subject to the authority of the

Inspector General of Police, be under the command of the Commissioner of Police of that state.

Thus, the Inspector General of Police (IGP), who is an appointee of the executive or the presidency, seat atop the apex of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF). He is answerable to the President in all his activities. The office of the IGP is located at the Force Headquarters in the capital territory Abuja. In the Force Headquarters there are seven Deputy Inspectors General (DIGs) in charge of administration. Nigeria is also divided into twelve zones. Each zone consists of a combination of between two to four states, and they are all under the command of Assistant Inspector General, who are directly answerable to the IGP. In deciding the territorial boundaries at all levels of the police, the IGP considers several factors among which are the population density; crime statistics; traffic (density, root, and accident); property (residential, business and industrial); and public centers of amusement in deciding the number of states that make up a zone (Odeyemi, 2016).

The zonal command structure of the police in Nigeria was part of the police reforms of the Ibrahim Babangida regime carried out in 1986. The reforms restructured the NPF into five directorate (which has since grown into seven departments with the latest addition of ICT department in 2012) and seven area commands (which is now twelve zonal commands). The government justified the restructuring as necessary in order to decentralize the command structure and operations of the force for greater efficiency. This it argued, would make for speedier decision making and better response to matters of law and order (Momoh and Banjo, 2001).

The personnel strength of the NPF is put at 317,540 police and traffic wardens as at January 2016, with over 6, 500 filled formations made up of 12 zonal, 36 states and FCT, 127 area commands, 1,332 divisions, 1,579 police stations and 3,756 police posts (Ameh, 2016). At an estimated 170,000,000 national population, this put the police national population ratio at 1:535. This is less than the United Nations recommended general benchmark of one police officer per 400 citizens (Human Right, Watch, 2010).

Understanding the Concept of Community Policing

Community policing on is basically the engagement of the civilian populace in policing. Community policing entails efforts to bring about a closer liaison between police and a community, with the end result being a close police-community relationship that facilitates the maintenance of a safe environment. Examples of this can include decentralizing the police service to the local area through sub-police offices; identifying regular foot-patrol officers and; the introduction of structured networks, such as neighbourhood watch with the involvement of community members. However, the legitimacy of community depends on the existence of a state police. State police is a

police formed, funded and maintained by a sub-national government of a federal system in line with constitutional provisions. Thus within Nigeria context, the sub-national governments refers to any of the 36 states that make up the Nigerian federation. Its area and sphere of influence will be within the territory of such a state, and the state legislature holds power to legislate over it. Agwanwo (2014) sees it as policing in a federal system in which the state government employs police officers for the purpose of policing the state.

Thus, non-centralized police structure within a federation refers to a state where policing functions are shared by the central and sub-national governments and in most cases with emphasis on community policing in line with constitutional provisions. This means that community policing can only receive constitutional backing through state police structure constitutionally established in a federation. This means that community policing can only receive constitutional backing through state police structure constitutionally established in a federation. However, notwithstanding that in Nigeria, many communities employ the services of vigilante groups and other neighbourhoods watch services, there is no constitutional backing of community policing in Nigeria. The Centralized character of police structure in Nigeria is antithetical to community poling.

Policing especially in relation to federalism and specifically within the United State context, state police operates within the confines of police powers which in the words of Routh (2011) implies the authority granted to state government to make laws that maintain order and safeguard the health, morals, public safety and welfare of state citizens. Police powers are an important aspect of states' reserved powers which the constitution specifies as powers not assigned to national government. State legislatures exercise their respective police power by directly enacting statues as well as by delegating such authority to their subordinate governmental entities in the form of counties, municipalities and special districts (Odeyemi, 2016). Thus, drawing heavily from the United States example, Weisburd and Eck (2004) drew attention to community policing which they termed problem-oriented policing and hotpot policing. Problem oriented policing (PO) for instance implies attempts to make police work more analytical in the identification of the 'problems' to be addressed, and constructive in the solution applied to the problem identified. The underline assumption is that traditional policing treats incidents brought to its attention as if they were discrete and having no connection or pattern because the officials may be foreign to the environment.

Community policing do not have a single identifiable historical source. It developed out of the need to fill a vacuum between policing and communities in modern twentieth century society that resulted from the alienation of the police from the community. The idea of community policing found its roots in the United Kingdom and the United States as far back as the 1950s, with its source lying in two main areas; first as part of an increasing call for citizens to become involved in community problem solving, and;

second to satisfy a growing awareness of the need to tackle juvenile crime and delinquency within the community (Donnelly 2006) cited in Odeyemi (2016).

Community policing is a philosophy that promotes organizational strategies which support the systematic use of partnership and problem solving techniques, to practically address the immediate conditions that may give rise to public safety issues such as crime, social disorder, and fear of crime (Dambazau, 2007). It embraces community partnerships and collaborative partnership between the law enforcement agency and the individuals and organizations they serve to develop solutions to problem and increase trust in policing (Eme & Anyadike, 2013). This strategy of giving local communities more of a say in the running of local police services, according to Aremu (2014), gained momentum for a variety of reasons; in the first place is the general dissatisfaction with traditional law-enforcement practices and the demand for greater police accountability for increasing crime rate. Community policing recognizes that community members can work together with law-enforcement agencies and play an active role in reducing local crime. Thus, meaning that community policing is based on the premise of collective responsibility for effective involvement by all in the society in the art of policing.

The foregoing buttresses the importance of community policing in law enforcement. Duru (2012) sees it as a policy remedy for the police-public antagonism that has dogged law enforcement. He affirms that community policing entails democratization of public policing by promoting accountability and participation. In essence, then, in the words of Duru (2012) cited in (Odeyemi, 2016), it:

seeks to practicalize the idea of people's police, which is not a public police controlled by the ...government, but instead by the citizens ... it is a police service that is keenly aware of and sensitive to the needs of the community and committed to working with the community members to mitigate their fears or concerns about security and safety ... it promotes production of knowledge by citizens and their police. They jointly diagnose problems, identify and implement solutions: citizens bring to the relationship their sense of community, knowledge about problems in their neighborhoods, their own capacities to solve problems, and the potential to support or authorize police actions. Police bring to communities concern not only for their welfare but also for the constitutional rights and the welfare of individuals and the community at large.

Community policing are usually associated to traditional leaders or new social movement leaders. Often, these informal de facto police are governed by local informal and traditional government and should therefore be recognized by the state under framework laws (Wisler 2010). Broogden (2005) recognize community-consultative

forums, neighborhood watch schemes, and problem-solving policing as models of community policing. Donnelly (2006) demarcates community-oriented and problem-oriented policing as variants. Examples of community-oriented policing include decentralizing the police service to the local area through sub-police offices: identifying regular foot-patrol officers: and the introduction of structured networks such as neighborhood watch and crime-prevention programmes, with the involvement of community members. Problem-oriented policing emphasizes effort at developing a joint system between police and the citizenry that focuses on community concerns and problems. While the community-oriented model tends to depict the citizen doing police work, with the associated problems of legitimization and authority, the problem-oriented model does not have the legitimacy problem because the police are normally in the lead role in partnership with the community (Donnelly, 2006).

Notwithstanding, the importance of community policing particularly as it relates to federalism and in security predicament as Nigeria is at the present, Nigerian constitution do not give place to state police thereby not legalizing community policing. Centralizing police structure with the operations and funding directly under the control of the federal government is antithetical to community policing.

The Essence of Police and Policing

The most important thing to man after satisfaction of his physiological needs from time immemorial is the needs for safety (Arelu, 2014). The need for safety led individuals, families and clans in the absence of law enforcement mechanisms taking it upon themselves to take revenge against those who may have injured or offended them. In effect, policing duties were performed through mutual obligations by community members, as individuals were often expected to act in a police capacity, whether bringing to justice a male-factor, who threatened the community or exercising personal vengeance prior to judicial institutions (Roth, 2006 cf. Odeyemi, 2016).

Overtime, however, as modern and complex societies developed so did the rise of sophisticated and formal structures and institutions for policing duties (Newborn and Rerner, 2012). In medieval society, adult males were obliged to be involved in the prevention and control of crime and disorder under the systems of 'hue, cry and pursuit' and the 'watch and ward' that preceded the emergence of specialized police forces as organs of the state. Moreover, the emergence of the state, with its vast bureaucracies anchored on centralization, hierarchical power structure, professional staff and claim to the monopoly over the means of legitimate violence, changed the traditional philosophy rooted in the idea of policing as everybody business. This resulted into the creation of specialized agencies as the police for controlling the use of violence by other groups. Inherent in this are the twin ideas of police and policing (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2004).

Thus, Routh (2006) notes:

The term police can be traced back to the Greek politeia, which alluded to all the affairs that affected the survival and order of state. By the 1700s, European states used la police (French) and die polizei (German) to refer to the internal administration, safety, protection, and surveillance of a territory. While the English eschewed the word police because of its absolutist connotations, the term gained increasing currency in France during the Napoleonic era. The term police was probably imported into England from France at the beginning of 18th century (Routh, 2006).

In contemporary times however, evidence in the literature demarcate police and policing. Rantatalo (2013) said that police can be described as a specific institution and policing as a set of activities and practices connected to societal social regulation. Rowe (2013) similarly, distinguished between the set of functions performed by the institution of the police service and the broader processes of social regulation and protection that govern everyday lives. He presents policing as a social function that many institutions that do not have any formal role in the regulation of social life can carry out. According to him, the word 'policing' was used in broad terms to signify social regulation in the widest sense, and did not come to be associated with the particular activities of a specific institution (the police) until relatively recently in many societies.

The foregoing suggests that policing involve activities and practices carried out in-order to purposively regulate activities within a defined social order. In order words, policing can be understood as processes of governance and social control. The emphases on policing as a means to achieve social order implies that a wide range of activities and societal functions in different aspect qualify as performing policing, and it is all about 'the security of people who reside within a particular geographical location with a common interest of protecting their lives and property; and who identifies that certain acts are reprehensible to the community well being' (Dambazau, 2007). It then implies that policing does not presuppose the existence of police as the police is just one of the several agencies that perform policing functions within a polity. While some of these are organized formally, there exist other forms of informal groups that undertake policing functions and deal with crime. Alemika and Chukwuma (2004) noted that many of these groups are rooted in their communities and they enjoy significant levels of legitimacy and they often walk in close collaboration with the formal police. According to Okenyodo and Ugwu (2014) in Nigeria some of the informal, policing groups that exist include; Neighbourhood Watch schemes, Residents/Tenants Associations, Street Guards, Vigilante Groups as well as groups based on ethnic or religious affiliations such as Odua People's Congress (OPC), Bakkassi Boys, Egbesu Boys, Hisbah, etc.

This shows that police represent just one of formal policing groups that may exist in a polity. Dambazau (2007) identify the police as the biggest, most visible and the important as well as the keeper of the criminal justice system, walking closely with the criminal courts and prisons to ensure that laws enforced. Thus, to understand the police as an institution is an important structure in policing activities. This is because, the role of the police is crucial to achieving the objectives of policing, which according to Odekunle (2004) are to:

Provide security or at least a social and psychological feeling of security for a majority of citizens, in a majority of places, and most of the time. And these central objective is a summary of the following sub-objectives which are prerequisites to that of security: To prevent, control and combat criminality where ever and by whoever: To maintain public order and peace: To render assistance and service to all citizens needing or requiring security; and to favorably symbolize the law and the government by always upholding the rule of law (Odekunle 2004).

The foregoing aptly captures what policing set out to achieve in a polity. It also underscores the notion that policing is an all-encompassing function that can be, and are, performed by the police in addition to other formal and informal institutions. In essence, while policing is a web of functions, the police is an institution. Ekweremadu (2013) notes 'the police are fundamental in fulfilling government's primary obligation of catering for the security and well fare of the people'. The police is an official organization whose job is to make people obey the law and to prevent and solve crime problem, and are, according to Newborn and Rerner (2012) "the primary source of security". OIewe and Anga (1994) on the other hand see the police as a body of people organized to maintain civil order and public safety, to enforce the law, and investigate breaches of the law and ensure prosecution of offenders in the law court. It is therefore a condition that community policing can only be legal when there is constitutional provision for state police as the state police is the umbrella for community policing. However, in Nigeria the constitutional provision is lacking. Using vigilante for policing to achieve a parochial objective does not constitute them into a police organ.

Impediments to Effective Policing in Nigeria

In Nigeria policing suffers from the colonial origin and heritage of police force which continue to impact the selection, training and world view of police men. The long years of military rules and autocratic civilian administration nurtured a police system in which officers have retained a significant aspect of colonial ethos thereby preventing the development of the police into an efficient public service organization. Oghi, (2013) avers that the police system continues to suffer from a dysfunctional mode of

recruitment largely improper for policing needs of the modern era, and colonial policing philosophy tainted with tendencies of incivility, brutality, emphasizes an order rather than security and safety of citizens. Even the name “Police Force” is not people oriented. The word *Force* has colonial connotation that is propelling the officers and men of the force to be brutal in their actions. Odekunle (2004) on his own part opines that an insufficient length of training period with very questionable emphases on physical drills and paramilitary work continue to impact on the orientation and competence of the officers and men of the police force. It is worthy to note that the Police Act under which the training and development of the NPF is subsumed prescribes a period of three to six months for training of recruit which is evidently too short.

Also, rather than a re-orientation of incoming recruit to help assuage some of the factors militating against the efficiency of the force, the newly recruited officers end up getting molded by, and into, the prevailing police sub-culture that end up sustaining rather than correcting debilitating challenges. The police have also suffered tremendously from corrupt practices and very poor perception of the organization among members of the public. The average police man is perceived as “lazy, corrupt, inefficient, bribe-taking, money extorting officer who connives at crimes if the price is right” (Okereke, 1993). This perception is founded on police-people relations dogged by discourtesy, non-challant attitude to complaints of citizen, dishonesty, corruption, abuse or misuse of the authority to arrest, detain or use force by a substantial number of police men (Odekunle, 2004). This highlights the magnitude of a prevailing scale of negative public-image for the police and a near pathetic police-community relations and abuse of power (Odeyemi, 2016).

Moreover, the country operate a police system in which the Force hold a sense of accountability to the government rather to democratic norms, the rule of law and members of the public as the ultimate custodian of legitimacy. Changing government policies in the areas of law enforcement and the maintenance of order in the country has led to a situation in which the police had been divested of many of its primary policing functions and responsibilities. This is as a result of the establishment of several agencies of government over the years saddled with different aspect of law enforcement and order maintenance. All powers of funding and control of the police rest with the federal government. But notwithstanding that administratively, the institution has a five tier command structure (Headquarter, Zonal, State, Area and divisional commands), directions emanates from the Force Headquarters commanded by the Inspector-General and six Deputy Inspectors-General in charge of various departments. The twelve zonal Headquarters are headed by Assistant Inspectors General of Police (AIGs), while the thirty six States Commands and Federal Capital Territory Commands, are each headed by a commissioner of police (CP) all answerable to the Inspector General of Police.

Consequently, there appears to be an over concentration of senior police officers at Force Headquarters level. Also, the twelve AIGs who hold the various zones are largely rendered ineffective because the command CPs report their day-to-day operational and administrative duties directly to the IGP, thereby rendering the AIGs redundant. The unwieldy administrative structure is also applicable in the area of funding. Budgetary provision for the police goes to the Force Headquarters and statistics reveal that about seventy percent over head and capital expenditure are carried out at the Force Headquarters, leaving only thirty percent to the other command levels (2006 presidential committee on the reform of the Nigeria Police Force cf. Chukwuma, 2008). This lop sided allocation has telling effects on policing at the local levels. Famutimi (2013), in a report published by the Punch Newspaper quoted a DPO serving in Ogun state as admitting that:

It is very difficult to run a police station as a DPO without your men engaging in corrupt practices. How do you run a police station without funds? To describe the allocations we get quarterly as inadequate is to say the least. I get less than 40,000 to cater for my running cost quarterly, as a matter of fact, to run a truly motorized patrol, for instance, you will need about forty liters of petrol in twenty four hours for a patrol van and these amounts to 3,840 daily. In this division we have four patrol vehicles and this makes it 15,360 daily. If we decide to spend the allocation only on petrol, the money wouldn't last more than three days. So where do we get the money to make up for the huge short falls? Am I in the position to tell police men who incessantly complain of poor salaries to donate money to run the affairs of the station?

The foregoing highlights the challenges of centralized structure, how it is impacting on police operations in the country, and is a major impediment militating against efficient and effective maintenance of law and order thereby is institutionalizing insecurity to the detriment of the citizens.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Security of lives and property is an inseparable component of governance in all societies. And the efficacy of any government is measured on the efficiency of the structures and processes put in place by the government to protect the citizens and their property. It is therefore worthy to note that the extent to which the security of citizens and their environment can be achieved depends to large extent on their security system. Consequently, the structure of police of any country is of paramount importance. This is because the police is the primary agency of the state in charge of crime detection, investigation of criminal reports and prosecution of criminal suspects in

the law courts to ensure maintenance of law and order within a community. On the other hand, the police is a critical components of the security system of every political system. Thus, it is expedient that the police is able to adapt itself in such a way as to collaborate with the environment so that the community is encouraged to play their roles in providing oversight, necessary information and an avenue of political neutrality to enable the police carry out its function with the highest level of professional competence that yields the desired result.

The prevalent global trend in crime-fighting and the realities of security challenges in Nigeria makes the fragmentation of police which will give constitutional backing to community policing pertinent. To this effect, the police institution in Nigeria should be devoid of every form centralization and be insulated from every form of political control and influence. This is to ensure that the police is developed into a professional security organization working under civilian oversight and with allegiance to the people. Every constitutional provision preventing or militating against state police which will legalize community policing should be amended to reflect the realities of effective and people oriented police service. Policing activities can be everybody's business; however, police as an arm of governance is not every body's business. The later is a constitutionally recognized professional that ensure control of crime and criminality in a society through investigation of any criminal act (reported or otherwise) and the prosecution of any act of criminality in the law court. Thus using Vigilante groups, Neighbourhood Watch and other similar groups to maintain law and order does not make such groups an arm of the police or a legal representative arm of any institution of government.

There is need for inputs from the states and local government civilian authorities into the police as the activities of the police are usually within their geographical jurisdiction. Thus, the clarions call by this paper for constitutional decentralization of police structure in Nigeria. Making the state governor the chief security officer of his state without control over the police in his state is ironical and misleading.

This paper agree with Odeyemi (2016) that there is an urgent and continuous need to de-orientate the police from its usual appeal to, and deployment of force approach in handling issues and relating with the civilian populace. The police should focus more on building vibrant and respectful civil relations with members of the public in ways that do not compromise the efficiency of the institution. More importantly, there is the need to institutionalize and strengthen police-community relations in ways that continuously and significantly manage the long standing police-people mutual distrust.

Finally, this paper recommends the change of the name: "Nigeria Police Force" to "Nigeria Police Service".

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