Community Policing and Domestic Security in Abia State, Nigeria, 2014-2018

Ogbonnaya N. Udoh, Iheanyi K. Woke & Agodi Kanu

Abstract

The study examined the role of community policing in advancing internal security in Abia State, Nigeria, 2014-2018. The study utilized the Social Contract theory. The Social Contract theory was adopted because of its suitability in explaining how rising levels of insecurity has generated police-community partnership.Within the context of our method and source of data collection, this study utilized information from books, journals as well as data from primary source like with the chairman of Abia State Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC). Also, with the consent of the Nigeria Police Force, Abia State Command, further information was obtained and unstructured elite interviews were conducted for some senior police officers. Basically, the study discovered that community policing in Abia state is a community-driven mechanism formulated to tackle real and imagined security challenges threatening communities. Interactively, the study discovered that community policing in Nigeria is informed by the need to build overall police acceptance, manage information gathered, curtail arbitrary arrests, diversify funding, build a police-community partnership framework that curtails crimes and builds trust, handle valuable information that threatens public peace and public order, among others. Finally, this study suggest that the panacea for effective community policing is for the community to take the police as their own police through showing more close interest in what goes on with the police and be part of its successes and failures of their police.

Keywords: Community Policing; Internal Security; Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC); Social Contract

Introduction

Analysts and commentators on national security contend that managing the growing security problem by the Nigeria Police Force is worsened by a lack of adequate incentives/motivation; inadequate funding and logistic support; irregular payment of ration allowance to security operatives especially those on patrol and out-of-base assignment; lack of modern/sophisticated crime-combating equipment and communication gadgets; increasing number of bad elements in the system; inadequate provision of police aircraft for surveillance; lack of good qualitative training for new entrants and provision of refresher courses for those in the force; non-adherence to confidentiality in handling information from members of the public (Ngige, 2004).

Nigeria is presently battling with a growing security problem, which is progressively threatening its sovereignty and development. The domestic security challenges in Nigeria is so alarming such that there is ethnic conflict in the North, kidnapping in virtually all parts of the country, militancy and oil pipeline vandalisation in the Niger Delta Region, terrorism and religious extremism by Boko Haram in the North East, self-determination agitations by the Independent People of Biafra (IPOB) and the Movement for the Actualisation of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), cattle rustling and herdsmen disturbances in the North and Central Regions, ritual killings in the South and West Region, with Abia State noted for fatal kidnappings and armed robbery (Ukoji and Okolie-Oseneme, 2016; Onime, 2018).

Attempts have been made by various administrations in Abia State towards addressing the security situation. Former Governor T.A. Orji invited the Nigerian military to Aba to quell the insecurity in Aba in particular and

Abia in general. The incumbent governor, Governor Okezie Ikpeazu has been donating vehicles to the Abia State Police Command so as to boost the war against criminals in the state (Nwagboso, 2012; Okoro, 2015).

Also, as a result of the unprofessional attitude of the Nigeria Police Force, most Nigerians consider them as an organization that you should have minimal interaction with. Alemika cited in Project Gist International (2017) points out that throughout Nigeria's history, the police had been a tool of the state, mistrusted and feared by the people instead of being friendly to the general public. Hence, the public at large still see the police as an instrument of the ruling class that are always ready to unleash terror at the slightest opportunity.

Furthermore, the Nigerian public's disrespect for the Nigeria police stems from the nature and character of the Nigeria state, which Abamba (2005) described as suffering from poor economic performance, lack of planning, squander mania, indebtedness to world financial organizations and associations, import dependence with cumulative effects of deprivation, disillusionment, poverty, corruption , unemployment, rising insecurity, disease, and so on. Indeed, threats to community and internal security spreads under the umbrella of the poor provisioning of security and welfare by the Nigerian government thereby generating the frustration-aggression-deprivation mix within the people. For instance, Olawole (2018) credits a Nigeria Poverty Statistics report with revealing that the poverty levels in the South-East as 27.4 percent, with poverty level in Abia State put at 21.0 percent.

Therefore, community policing emerged to help build confidence between the Police and the civilians, maintain internal security, solicit support and enhance the image of the Nigeria Police Force. Community policing in Nigeria is also informed by the failure of the conventional police in Nigeria to meet the United Nations' standard ratio of one policeman to four hundred civilian population (1:400) resulting from poor government funding of the Nigeria Police Force. The Nigeria Police Force ratio is about 1:2000, which is inadequate to cover the entire country. This necessitated the search for an alternative means of policing Nigeria cheaper, hence, the emergence of community policing (Interview interaction with some Senior Police Officers).

In our unstructured interview on 28th August, 2018 with the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Zone 9, Umuahia, she revealed that, community policing in Nigeria is informed by the need to build overall police acceptance, manage information gathered, curtail arbitrary arrests, diversify funding, build a police-community partnership framework that curtails crimes and builds trust, handle valuable information that threatens public peace and public order, among other issues. Community policing members comprises the organized private sector, the media, traditional rulers, youth, women, vigilante groups, bankers, teachers/lecturers. This study adds that in bringing policing closer to the members of the public, the Nigeria police use the community policing forums expressed as Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) to ascertain security priorities, thereby increasingly making the police proactive and not reactionary.

Basically, community policing and police community partnership creates room for mutual policing. Therefore, community policing is synergized in police community that is enhanced through the PCRC forum. The PCRC was established in Nigeria as a body that represents the wider views of the people on matters of public safety, whose activities is enhanced through increased and matured collaboration to serve the people better, foster friendship and mutual respect among the people and the police (Kanu, 2012).

The Nigeria Police Force utilizes the community policing mechanism as a tool for the PCRC forum to penetrate the public so as to gather information, draw financial and material supports. Also, the PCRC is used by the Nigeria Police Force to build confidence and trust within communities. Most times, if there are perceived security threats, the PCRC passes on the information to the police for investigation and possible prosecution (Unstructured interview on 28th August, 2018 with the Zonal Police Public Relations Officer, Zone 9, Umuahia).

Furthermore, this study views community policing as helping to define internal security. The important purpose of community policing is to add new standards to policing, thereby fundamentally elevating equality, justice and

mutual respect. Community policing is dynamic, diversified and multi dimensional forum that unconsciously creates and enhances noticeable good relationships between members of the community and the police. Also, community policing fosters group participation in proffering solution to problems confronting the community. Against the background of the security and image concerns, this study explores community policing and internal security in Abia State, 2014-2018.

Theoretical Framework

This study situates its analysis through the basic propositions derived from the Social Contract theory. The Social Contract theory is rightly associated with modern moral and political theory and is given its first full exposition and defense by Thomas Hobbes. After Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau are the best known proponents of this enormously influential theory, which has been one of the most dominant theories within moral and political theory throughout the history of the modern West. The social contract theory is nearly as old as philosophy itself, is of the view that persons' moral and/or political obligations are dependent upon a contract or agreement among them to form the society in which they live (Nbete, 2012).

However, Elahi (2005) points out that the social contract theory is a mechanistic theory that is interwoven in self-interest, individualism, materialism, utilitarianism and absolutism. This theory believed that prior to the social contract, man lived in the state of nature that was filled with fear and selfishness encumbered by solitary, poor, nasty and brutish and short condition. The theory portends that it is out of the state of nature and the need to avoid misery and pain emerged the voluntary surrendering of the inherent rights and freedoms of self-protection and self preservation by man (emphasis added: community) to some authority who command obedience (emphasis added: police-community relations).

According to Sabine (1956:397) "security depends upon the existence of a government having the power to keep the peace and to apply the sanctions needed to curb man's innately unsocial inclinations. The effective motive by which men are socialised is the fear of punishment, and the authority of law extends only so far as its enforcement is able to be reach". On the one hand, Sabine adds that the social contract theory assumes the primacy of mightiest authority, who is addressed as the 'ruler' or 'monarch' that has the absolute mandate of protecting and preserving lives and properties. On the other hand, the theory accepts civil law as the real law that upholds the principle of 'might is always right'. In the opinion of McCartney and Parent (n.d:n.p)

> The social contract theory is another descriptive theory about society and the relationship between rules and laws, and why society needs them. For Hobbes, the solution is a social contract in which society comes to a collective understanding — a social contract — that it is in everyone's interest to enforce rules that ensure safety and security for everyone, even the weakest. Thus, the social contract can deliver society from a state of nature to a flourishing society in which even the weak can survive. The degree to which society protects the weak may vary; however, in our society, we agree to the contract and need the contract to ensure security for all……It dictates that we will not break laws or certain moral codes and, in exchange, we reap the benefits of our society, namely security, survival, education and other necessities needed to live.

As Elahi (2005) establishes, the relevance of this framework of analysis is built on an Hobbesian argument that human beings are reasonable. Human beings respond mechanistically to that which they desire and repel that which they averse. Basically, that which the Abia people is averse to is the rising levels of insecurity. The rising levels of insecurity in Abia State, as Ukoji and Okolie-Oseneme, (2016) and Onime (2018) earlier puts it, can be seen in fatal kidnappings and armed robbery. Deductively from the McCartney and Parent (n.d), that collective understanding and everyone's interest to enforce rules that ensure safety and security for everyone gave room for a police-community partnership objectively broadened through the PCRC framework.

Equally, Hobbes further argues with prefect logic that it is not consent but "unions" (in this case: PCRC in Abia State), and unions means the submission of the wills of all to the will of one (in this case: police-community

relations/PCRC). Therefore, in applying the basic assumption of the Hobbesian theory to our study, we argue that enforceability and a common front towards tackling domestic insecurity in Abia State is consolidated through the mechanism of the community policing. The relevance of this framework of analysis to our study is evident in its suitability in explaining how rising levels of insecurity and the need for police-community partnership has engineered the Nigerian people to replicate community policing. It also brings to the fore, how insecurity has generated great flexibility on the Nigerian people to concretize their hold on their community.

Basically, the character and nature of the Nigeria state has created an enabling environment for the emergence of community policing. The Social Contract theory is better suited to our study because it helps to analyze and appreciate the internal contradictions and motivating factors in the national vexing and worrisome problem of threat domestic insecurity in Nigeria.

Understanding Community Policing and Security
Nwakanma and Amugo (2018, p.146) have argued that "community policing is an initiative that is founded on the principle, that in a democratic society, the police is entrusted by fellow citizens to protect and serve the public and therefore must be part and not apart from the community". Community policing is largely receiving attention, thus witnessing a paradigm shift from a strictly state- centric paradigm to the constructive involvement of the civil society, who ultimately are the end users of the police service. Engaging in community policing has proven to be a very effective instrument to tackle social conflicts, insecurity and criminality (Kanu, 2016).
Aniche (1993) observed that community policing is neither foreign nor novel to Africa. It has existed long before colonialism, the traditional Igbo society of the now South-Eastern Nigeria which has devised a community-oriented means of policing its communities and curbing or preventing crime using primarily the age grade system, masquerade and the secret society. The import of this traditional security architecture was that the task of policing was that of all adult male citizens and policing functions were undertaken in a clearly structured, communal system that was based on the values, input and tasking system of the local communities. Although, this traditional community policing practices, varied as they were in orientation and implementation, they were known to share the modern principles associated with community policing in the advanced world.

The United States of America (2008) Presidential Committee Report on police reform defines community policing as a straight forward concept of shared responsibility between the police and the community with a focus on provision of efficient and effective service. Tillman (2000:1) defined community policing "as bringing police and citizens together to prevent crime and solve problems". Coquilhat (2008) maintained that this alignment and partnership offers the public a larger window into police activity and provides opportunity for "grassroot support for the police in particular and the government in general.

Drawn from the perspectives of scholars on policing as Diamond and Weiss (2009); Lawrence and Mc Carthy (2013); Okoro (2013), Kanu (2012), Nwakanma and Amaugo (2018), among others, this study particularly perceives community policing as an attempt by members of particular communities to establish a well-ordered human association that is geared towards sustaining community friendship and civic responsibilities. This study views community policing as necessitated by the need for persons within a defined community to take concreted steps and actions towards confronting real and imagined threats to its community. Also, this study presents community policing as a subcategory of the general notion of policing. Community policing is the cornerstone of human collectiveness. It advocates unity, cohesion and allegiance towards sustaining community existence and aiding state survival.

At the level of public partnership, the idea behind community policing stems from a changing dynamics in the globally acceptable policing style and systems that is in conformity with the more universally acceptable practices. A large number of police scientists and criminologists share in the view that community policing remains the best initiative in the maintenance of law and order, protection of life and property and crime control. In Nigeria, the idea of community policing was conceived by former President Olusegun Obasanjo in December, 2003. However,

the formal take-off of the community policing in Nigeria can be traced to the community policing project team put together in 2004 by the former Inspector General of Police, Mr. Tafa Balogun. On April 27th 2004, President Obasanjo launched the community policing project in Nigeria at Enugu, Enugu State (Nwakanma and Amugo, 2018:146).

Among all other scholarly contributions on what security is, this study agrees with Alli (2010) that security as a contested concept that is generally accepted as the condition or feeling of safety from fear, anxiety, danger, poverty and oppression; the defense, protection and preservation of core values and the absence of threats to these core values. Security concerns the individuals and groups that are not just states alone, hence when individuals are not secured, then the state is not secure. For Alli, the broadening of the concept of security has gone beyond individual, societal, state, regional and global levels. It now involves peace and security, the broadening of the concept of security in non-military dimensions which encompasses social, economic and political factors as environment, migration, ethno-religious crisis, identity, health/diseases (HIV/AIDS, bird flu, malaria), poverty, human rights abuse, political disputes, political succession, bad governance.

Collaborations between the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) and Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) in Abia State, 2014-2018
In our unstructured interview on 28th August, 2018 with the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Zone 9, Umuahia, she revealed that through providing financial and material support the Abia state government is making tremendous efforts towards addressing the security situation. However, the increasing security threats in Abia State as- rising cases of kidnapping, human trafficking, armed robbery, rising unemployment, among others; reinforces the analytical importance of a attempting an evaluation of community policing expressed through the PCRC aid to the Nigeria Police, Abia State Command in ensuring the maintenance of domestic security and bridge the gap between the police and the public. Therefore, Table 1 below represents the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) achievements in Abia State are as follows:

Table 1: Some Selected Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) Contributions to Policing and the Nigeria Police Force, Abia State Command, 2014-2018

S/N	Material and Financial Contributions
1	Printing of fliers on security tips for the public. Organizing of a sensitization and orientation programme for Abia State Secondary School students on grass-root security
2	Passed useful information to the Nigeria Police that have led to the recovery of stolen cars and other crimes in Abia state.
3	Sinking of borehole and assisting in the renovation of the Police Officers Mess, Umuahia. Expansion of the Division Police Officers' office at Umuokpara, Umuahia North Local Government Area.
4.	Financial and material contributions to Police Children School in Umuahia and Aba areas.
5.	Free medical treatment for 250 policemen and women in Abia State Police Command
6.	Chairman PCRC, Amb. Emma Nwosu personal donation of 10 sewing machines to Nigeria Police Officers' widows through CP Adamu; donation of 50 bags of cement to the Nigeria Police Force, Abia State Police Command for renovation activities; donation of delivery kits to MOPOL 55 Clinic and helping in the building of the police armoury. Payment of N96,000 for medical operation of Cpl. Gabriel of MOPOL 55; providing two times free medical treatment for all officers, wives and children of MOPOL 55 Squadron. Donation 750 wrappers to all women in MOPOL 55 during the time of CSP Dankwano. Donation of

	N200,000 for the Police Church Chapel building project and settling of N600,000 worth of medical bills at Living World Hospital Aba for men and women of the Nigeria Police Force, among other contributions.
7.	Central Police Station (CPS) Aba, Abayi, Osisioma, Akwette, Uratta, Bende, World Bank, Umuobiakwa and Arochukwu Police Divisons- building of conference hall, security tower, toilet facilities, perimeter fence, sinking of borehole and provision of electricity generating sets
8.	Construction of a two-bedroom bungalow for the Divisional Police Officer and security tower at Ndegoro Police Division
9.	Donation of brand new vehicle to Osisioma Police Division by one of the patron.

Sources: Data provided by the Police Public Relations Officer (PPRO), Abia State Police Command in face-to-face interview, 28th -31st August, 2018 and additional information supplied by the State Chairman, Police Community Relations Committee, Abia State on 31st August, 2018.

Examining closely Table 1 above, it could be seen that in Abia State, the PCRC has significantly fostered community policing and enhanced internal security, between 2014 and 2017. This study observes that the PCRC forum in Abia state has created and enhanced good relationships between community members; the community and the police, hence fostering group participation in proffering solution to security problems confronting the communities. Generally, it could be seen from the Table 1 above that the PCRC generally stands in the gap between the police and the public and as such community policing practitioners in Abia state renders sizeable and commendable level of financial and material assistance to the Abia State Police Command. Thus, the potency and effectiveness of community policing through the PCRC forum in Abia state shows that their involvement in policing activities has helped to reduce the level of crime and stress on the Nigeria Police Force.

Deductions from the Table 1 above and information gathered revealed that the relationship between the Nigeria Police, Abia State Command is largely cordial. Also, this study discovered that PCRC is functioning effectively at some Divisions, while it is not working effectively at some divisions. Again, in our interaction with some Senior Police Officers (names withheld), they revealed to us that one, the rate at which members of the public volunteer useful information is not encouraging. Two, the lack of essential equipments for the Police is hindering the effectiveness of community policing. Three, the discouraging lack of confidence and trust by the public on their own police is a source of concern.

Conclusion
This study revealed that the nature and character of the Nigeria state has created an enabling environment for the manifestation of such security challenges armed robbery, kidnapping; banditry, piracy, among others. This paper examines community policing and domestic security in Abia State, Nigeria between 2014 and 2018. This study discovered that community policing through the PCRC forum has succeeded in assisting the Nigeria Police in internal security and welfare provision. This study strongly admires the contribution of the past and current Abia state government, Police Committee Relations Committee (PCRC), Abia State towards supporting the men and women of the Nigeria Police Force, Abia State Police Command. This study concludes that the most striking feature of community policing in Abia state, Nigeria is that the PCRC forum has provided an enabling environment for the rapid transformation of domestic security to serve the purpose of human security, welfare and development to the advantage of the people and the police. Also, this study discovers that community policing in Abia state, Nigeria has become a commonplace for special role in empowerment and overcoming poor standard in the police. It has become an avenue for uniting communities, protecting and promoting equality, justice and mutual respect. However, this study advocates that in order to sustain the foundational principles of community policing and maintain domestic security and avert perceived problems with the police and other external

interventions as political interference, self-interest and legitimacy crisis; this suggest a 'rule book' that will offer a set of principles that guides rules of engagements.

Finally, this study suggests that Nigeria populace should build more trust and confidence in the police. Increasingly, this study recommends that the panacea for effective community policing is in the Nigeria populace changing their mindset towards the police as their own. For community policing is a form of policing that revolves around citizens resolve to showing more close interest in what goes on with the police and be part of its successes and failures of the police. Once the community sees the police as such, the crime rate will be reduced drastically. The Nigeria Police on the other hand, need to be more professional in their dealings with the public. They should respect the fundamental human rights of the public, be civil and friendly to the people whom they serve. This will build more police-community confidence, thereby enhancing domestic security.

References

Abamba, S.C. (2005). The Nigerian Factor and Economic Development. *Nigerian Forum*: *Journal of Opinion on World Affairs*, 26(7&8), July-August.

Alli, W.O., 2010, "Security Challenges of Governance in West Africa" In O.C. Eze, C. Anigbo, and C. Dokubo (eds.), *Nigeria's Security Interest in Africa.* pp.73, Nigeria Institute for International Affairs and Printserve Limited, Lagos.

Coquilhat, J. (2008) *Community Policing: An International Literature Review*. Wellington: New Zealand Police Diamond and Weiss (2009) "Community Policing: Looking to Tomorrow". Retrieved from- https://ric-zai-inc.com/Publications/cops-w0520-pub.pdf. Washington: US Department of Justice

Elahi, M. (2005). "What is Social Contract" Retrieved from- http://www.sophiaproject.org/uploads/1/3/9/5/13955288/elahi_socialcontract.pdf, on 21/11/2018.

Igwe, O. (2002). *Politics and Globe Dictionary*. Enugu: Jamoe Enterprises Nigeria.

Lawrence and Mc Carthy (2013) "What Works in Community Policing". California: University of California Berkley School of Law. Retrieved from- https://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/What_Works_in_Community_Policing.pdf. on 29/08/2018.

McCartney and Parent (n.d.) "Ethics in Law Enforcement: Social Contract". Retrieved from- https://opentextbc.ca/ethicsinlawenforcement/chapter/2-9-social-contract-theory, on 22/11/2018

Nbete, A.D. (2012) "The Social Contract Theory: A Model for Reconstructing A True Nigerian Nation-State". *International Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 2(5), August. Retrieved from- http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_15_August_2012/34.pdf, on 12/12/2019.

Kanu, A, (2016). *Community Policing: Securing the Gated Community; Facts, Cases and Nuggets*. Lagos: Template Consulting Limited.

Ngige, C.N. (2004). "Federalism and Management of Internal Security". Paper presented at the National Conference on Nigeria Government and politics, 1999-2004. Organized by the Department of Political Science, University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) on April 20.

Nwakanma, E.U. and Amugo, I.M. (2018). *The Nigeria Police and Sociology of Crime Control*. Lagos: Napthali Prints Nigeria, Limited

Nwagbaso, C.I. (2012). "Security Challenges and Economy of the Nigerian State, 2007-2011", *American International Journal of Contemporary* 2(6), June, Retrieved from- http://www.aijcrnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_6_June_2012/28.pdf on 12/12/2019.

Okoro, B.C. (2013). *Police Law and Your Rights*. Lagos: Princeton Publishing Company.

Okoro, B (2015) "Abia Donates 20 Patrol Vehicles To Police". Retrieved from- Abia-donates-20-patrol-vehicles-to-police, on 12/12/2019 from

Olawole, S. (2018). "Nigeria Poverty Statistics and Poverty Rate in Nigeria" .Retrieved from- https://naijaquest.com/nigeria-poverty-statistics/

Onime, B.E (2018). "Insecurity and economic Growth in Nigeria: A Diagnostic Review". *European Scientific Journal*, 14(4), p.388.Retrieved from- http://eujournal.org/index.php/esj/article/viewFile/10575/10042, on 3/9/2018

Presidential Taskforce on 21st century policing (2015).Final Report of the President Taskforce on 21stCentury Policing.Washington DC; Office of Community Oriented Policing servicing.

Project Gist International, (August 15, 2017). *Public Perception of the Nigeria Police Crime and Prevention Control.* Retrieved from-http://projectgist.com.ng/2017/08/15/public-perception-nigeria-police-crime-prevention-control, on 31/08/2018.

Sabine, G. (1956). *A History of Political Thought*. Bristol: Western Printing Services Limited.

Tillman, R.J. (2000). The effectiveness of Community policing School of Police Staff and Command, Eastern Midugam University.

Toyo, E. (1983). "The Return of Political Economy: A Contribution to the History and Typology of Economic Analysis". *The Nigerian Journal of Political Economy*. No.1, April.

Ukoji, V.N. and Okolie-Oseneme, J. (2016) "A Study of Crime Reporting in Nigeria". Retrieved from-http://www.nigeriawatch.org/media/html/Ukoji2016.pdf

Ogbonnaya N. Udoh (Ph.D) is of Department of Political Science, Abia State University, Uturu (ABSU), Nigeria, udohogbn@yahoo.com, 08030710546

Iheanyi K. Woke (Ph.D) is of Department of Political Science Abia State University, Uturu (ABSU), wokekingsley@yahoo.com, 08032851845

Agodi Kanu is the President, Template Consulting Limited, Lagos (Security Consultants), agodi_kanu@yahoo.com, 08063559194