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**Rivalry or Partnership Policing?: Harvesting the Gains of the State and Non-State Security Providers in Ilorin, Nigeria.**

**Bakare, Adebola Rafiu\***  
Department of Political Science,  
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.  
Mobile: +2348055803641, +2348082114424  
E-mail: bolaonboard@yahoo.com  
bakare.ar@unilorin.edu.ng

**Abstract**

*The surge in criminal activities and urban conflicts depicts police inability in stemming the tide of insecurity tide which made Nigerians and government-owned institutions to turn to non-state security providers for protection. This trajectory resulted in the proliferation of vigilante security apparatus bringing about two security providers in a single polity. This paper examines the nature of the relationship between these two security providers in the wake of the legal framework which criminalizes non-state actors' possession of fire-arms. It also measures public perception on which security provider is more effective using Ilorin as a case study. The study utilized qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis. It discovered that the relationship between the two security providers is that of a mutual distrust and mistrust. It reveals that most people prefer the non-state security mechanism because it is relatively cheaper and conspicuously effective in crime prevention. The study discovered that this trend is as a result of the challenges hindering the effectiveness of the police such as: corruption, inadequate funding and logistic infrastructure, manpower shortage, inadequate ICT equipment to gather and analyze intelligence information, amongst others. The paper recommended that there should be a paradigm-shift from the inherited European model of policing which alienated the people from direct participation in the provision of security to that of community policing where there will be a partnership between state and non-state security providers by blending contemporary policing strategies of the state with that of the non-state.*

**Keywords:** Traditional policing, crime prevention, corruption, insecurity, urban conflict.

**Introduction**

There seems to be increasing attention and recognition for the institutionalization of non-state security service apparatus otherwise referred to as the informal policing. The debates about how to improve safety and security for both urban and rural dwellers in Nigeria led to the payment of increasing attention and



shifting confidence away from the formal policing structure to that of an informal one, in response to the apparent inability of the former to adequately protect citizen from criminal activities.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the police as an institution of crime control is under questioning especially in developing countries where there are numerous factors that could lead to high level of criminal tendencies. There is no consensus among scholars, practitioners, donors and politicians that the contribution of the police to the control of crime and maintenance of order in most societies is commendable (Reiner, 1992; Bayley, 1994; Samuel, 2012; Ikuteyiyo and Rotimi, 2010 Nimbe and Bayo, 2011). The unsatisfactory comments passed on the Nigerian police (by our respondents) about its low level performance is premised on institutional deficiencies as a result of inadequate funding, manpower shortage, archaic ICT equipments and most importantly observed perverted activities such as high level corruption, extra-judicial killings, lack of strong will to combat crime, needless confrontation with other security agencies, and disregard for human rights amongst others. However, it is out of context to argue that the Nigerian police is not contributing to the safety of the country. Despite its shortcomings, there are several instances where the police successfully foiled criminal activities, maintained peace at home and abroad (peacekeeping missions) and participated in democratization processes (electioneering activities) among others. To this end, one can appreciate the fact that it has been working assiduously to contribute positively to the setting up of a crime-free society despite the complicated hindrances facing it.

However, the laxity and apparent inefficiency of the Nigerian Police Force to tackle emerging security challenges in the country have led to propositions from different quarters for a change in the current method of policing in Nigeria. While some proposed devolution of police powers from the federal government to accommodate state governments as it is practised in the United States (notably by Babatunde Raji Fashola, and Adams Oshiomole, Lagos and Edo State Governors respectively), others give the option of community policing through the incorporation of informal police institutions (vigilantism) into mainstream policing for an effective police system in the country (Inyang and Abraham, 2013; Samuel, 2012; Alemika and Chukwuma, 2004; Okeshola and Mudiare, 2013; Obaro, 2003; Pam-Sha, 2005). However, there are fears attached to each option. The first option which seems more practicable and easy to implement may give some state governors who are major agitators for its establishment an undue advantage to harass and victimize the public bringing back the experience of the local police in the 1960s, in which policing became an instrument of oppression in the hands of the ruling class (Soyinka et al., 2011; Nimbe and Bayo, 2011). On the other hand, the non-state police could easily be perverted giving the ruthless nature of their activities. There are reported instances of extrajudicial killings, punishment of innocent suspects, mob action, and oppression amongst others allegedly committed by the vigilante security apparatus (Human Rights Watch [HRW], 2003; Human Rights Watch and the Centre for Law Enforcement Education [HRW & CLEEN], 2000). Thus, these divergent opinions

and the strategic importance of security invite a closer analysis and critical assessment of the effectiveness of the Nigerian police and the non-state police and their relationship toward one another in the same cause.

In response to this trajectory, some have argued for the establishment of community policing with effective police-public partnership in crime prevention. This advocacy is also supported by the Nigerian police as evident in the research carried out between March 2001 and December 2003 by the Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria (CLEEN Foundation) in partnership with the Nigerian Police in fourteen states selected from the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. To corroborate this, Pam Sha (2005) opined that if community policing strategy is adopted, it could assist to eradicate most of the challenges attributed to the traditional reactive police culture. Despite the CLEEN Foundation's finding, the low publicity given to this project and the laxity exhibited towards its full implementation together with other factors such as incessant transfer of criminal Investigation Police Officers (IPO's) who have unfinished cases on their tables, pose a threat to its success (Inyang and Abraham, 2013:55).

In contemporary Nigeria some varieties of these indigenous and informal policing systems not only exist but are still waxing strong. They are known with different names depending on the language differentials. Prominent among them are Bakasi Boys of the Igbo, the Hisha of the Hausa/Fulani, and the Odu'a People's Congress (OPC) of the Yoruba, among many others. These differences in names relate to the traditional practices and authorities of the community policing which literally translate to 'vigilante'. Some were already institutionalized by the local governments especially in the South-West and are most often called 'Neighbourhood watch'. They operate largely on indigenous ideas of social control using African traditional charms peculiar to their respective customs and traditions which basically serve as guiding principle derived from the norms and values of the indigenous people rather than the traditions, customs and practices of other societies outside Nigeria (Samuel, 2012: 137). Their perceived effectiveness is observed in the analysis of Okafor (2007) when he noted that:

Generally, these groups are more active in the night than during the day. Usually, able bodied young men of each community supported financially and materially by other community members, are charged with the task of securing the community and enforcing law, often with the aid of small weapons, such as machetes, bows and arrows, spears, and guns.

However, there are a number of non-state crime prevention community groups and initiatives that are different from vigilantism but have been lumped together under the term with the negative connotations that it implies (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2004:13). This makes it inevitable for us to identify the different types of informal policing structures that have been established by the people's activities as a response

to their search for safety and security<sup>1</sup>. On the other hand, the use of small arms by these groups is what actually brings to the fore the issue of mutual distrust between the state and non-state security providers. While the state police reluctantly accepted the fact that the non-state security provider attempts to achieve a mutual goal, it sees the use of fire-arms as been legally and exclusively reserved for it and consequently sees its usage by the non-state security outfits as a criminal act.

The fact that the two security providers must co-exist in Nigeria seems to have come to stay. Any call for the scrapping of the informal policing will be countered with stiff resistance by Nigerians because it is recognized that both the formal and informal policing structures are vital and have comparative advantage over one another. It should be noted that determining the effectiveness of any of the two security providers must transcend emotive and sentimental discourses, which is why this study engages with the issues and factors that have been affecting the effectiveness of the Nigerian police and the vigilante security apparatus. Premised on this, this paper aims to inquire whether people perceive informal policing groups as effective and should be legally recognized; to know how people perceive them in relation to the official police; to examine the nature of relationship between the two providers especially in the wake of the legal framework which criminalizes non-state actors' possession of fire-arms; to assess how the activities of these groups affect peoples' sense of safety and security; and to determine what can be done to foster partnership policing and discourage rivalry policing for the sake of national interest (safety and security of the public).

The scope of this study, therefore, is to provide a comprehensive understanding of the expectations and perceptions of people living in Ilorin metropolis, with respect to informal policing structures in particular and safety and security in general. In view of this, this paper is divided into six segments. Section

<sup>1</sup> Alemika and Chukwuima (2004: 28-29) in their study on the Poor and Informal Policing in Nigeria identified a number of these groups in Ekiti, Jigawa, Enugu and Benue States as: *Mbayer Ikyaior* (vigilante), Landlords associations, *Denon Toffi* (meaning Rapid Response Group), *Olode* (meaning hunters), *Egbe Odo* (meaning youth age grade), Boys Scouts, Cadets, *Ijofins* (meaning warriors who are mostly involved in settling land disputes), *Yan Farauta* (meaning local hunters), *Yan gadin dare* (meaning night watchmen), Nigerian Defence Corps, *Kato da gora* (meaning big man with a big stick), *Yan banga* (meaning hunters), *Ochi-ogodo*, *Ndi-nche* (meaning community guard or guards), Masquerade cult amongst others. Many of these groups - especially "olode", "ijofin", "yan farauta" and "yan banga" - were developed from the traditional or cultural practice of hunters providing safety and security within the community. For instance, among the Yorubas, the term "olode" meaning hunter, is now used more locally to refer to any group involved in the defence of a community at night. It is also the case where the term vigilante is now used broadly to refer to groups involved in community self-policing, irrespective of their origin and mode of operation. The confusing and interchangeable use of the term was evident in most of scholarship work on informal policing.



one, the introduction is followed by section two which reviews the literature on the concepts of community policing. Section three states the methodology adopted in the research effort by identifying the methods of data collection and analysis while Section four presents the research findings of the study on peoples' perceptions about the two security service providers and the reasons why the people and governmental institutions patronize the non-state security apparatus despite the fact that it is not legally recognized to possess fire-arms which it does; and the level of satisfaction of its services. The section also analyzes the kind of relationship that exists between the two organs in the quest for safety and security of the polity. Section five highlights the challenges hindering the optimal performance of the two security apparatus. Finally, the sixth section concludes the study and outlines some recommendations that could be considered by government and people in response to the opportunities (prospects) and needs (challenges) of the two security providers.

#### The Concept of Community Policing

The concept of community policing can be traced to the 1980s, when the phenomenon of vigilante and vigilantism received scholarly attention through an analysis of the rise of crime and insecurity that witnessed the involvement of local groups in political conflicts and in a more general framework of a possible decline of law enforcement state agencies (Fourchard, 2003:2). Its emergence in the mid-1980's was as a result of the realization that formal and informal means of crime reduction/order maintenance were complementary and that the community and conventional police should work together to define "community crime prevention" (Rosenbaum, 1989). It refers to a community oriented approach to policing to combat crime. Community policing is in essence collaboration between the police and the community that identifies and solves community crime problems (Samuel, 2012:135). In the African context, this community input in the art of policing takes two forms. First, it takes the form of providing able bodied men with small and light weapons and more often than not assisted with African traditional charms who serve as night guards to prevent armed robberies and other criminal tendencies (i.e. vigilantism). On the other hand, it can take a form of a group of people carefully selected based on their track behavioural record to form a special committee which liaises with the state police in providing adequate security in the community. An example of such committee is the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC). The decision to make policing to be the responsibility of all, technically denied the police the role of being the sole guardians of law and order. In essence, all members of the community become active allies in the effort to enhance the safety of the community. In view of this, community policing can be defined as the strategy where police departments work together in partnership with the community to reduce crime and the fear it generates, and is thus responsible for restoring a sense of community.

The movement towards community policing has gained momentum in recent years as police and community leaders search for more effective ways to promote public safety, enhance effective crime prevention and ensure the provision of quality

security of lives and property in the community. Despite the fact that this trend is global in nature, we observed that its strategies vary depending on the needs and responses of the community involved. Though, no matter the variations, all community policing efforts are premised on the basic principle of "*the police are the public and the public are the police*" as posited by Sir Robert Peel when he established the London Metropolitan Police in 1829 (Peak and Glensor, 1996). It is the Peel principle that enlightens the people to see the provision of security as a partnership and not the sole responsibility of the state police. This led to the proliferation of community informal policing structures popularly called vigilantism.

However, contemporary extant literature on vigilantism or informal policing in Africa has centered essentially on the South African experience, especially since the 1994 inauguration of multiracial democracy with focus on vigilantism as the only typology of informal policing structures (Alemika and Chukwuma, 2004:10). It should be noted that despite the acceptance of this general trend, some scholars and practitioners contest the recognition of vigilantism as the only informal security apparatus. Notable among them is Scharf (2000: 20) who argued that:

In each country ... it is important to get a picture of the range of non-state forms of policing/ordering: Crime prevention within the law but without working with the state to achieve the goals; crime prevention partnerships with state institutions; vigilantism for a particular vision of order differing from the state's expressed or implied vision of order; private armies belonging to political parties, religious or ethnic groups, specific organizations (such as the taxi hit-squads in SA) or warlords and shack-lords.

Alemika and Chukwuma (2004:10) noted that emerging studies in the field in other parts of Africa, have not only followed the narrowness of the mainstream South African discussion but have also used 'right-based' approach in their analysis, citing the works of Human Rights Watch in Nigeria as examples (see HRW, 2003; HRW and CLEEN, 2000). Despite the fact that vigilante and vigilantism have acquired a renewed interest especially in the African literature, Fleisher (2000: 209) noted that there is no scholarly consensus on what exactly vigilantism is, especially with regards to its nature and its relationship with the state. There have been contentions on the legality of method, composition and end result of informal policing as a means of community policing. Practices such as traditional divining, traditional protection devices, praying and fasting, and mob action seem illegal with regards to the African legal system. The Community Oriented Police (COP), based on the principle of a better co-ordination and consultation between the police and the policed, has been portrayed as 'a success story in the West' (Brogden, 2004: 635) whereas vigilante groups seem in many cases to undermine the legitimacy of the police and to resort to extra-judicial killings (HRW and CLEEN, 2000). This notion enhances the ambiguities that surround the concept of community policing premised on the illegality perpetrated by the practitioners.

In many cases, the line between state police and community vigilante groups is blurring especially in Nigeria. This is because the idea of vigilantism as a form of community policing could be retraced to community responses to crime and insecurity proposed by the police in the mid 1980s to substitute an older practice present since the colonial period and referred to as the "hunter guard system" or the "night guard system" (Fourchard, 2006:2-3). This is borne out of the need to provide cheap and effective policing to complement the effort of the state police that is bedeviled with manpower shortage. The privatization of the security operative is believed to have helped most communities in providing 'night guards' who most often than not make the community to be crime-free. We observe that the challenges of equipment and manpower shortage will not enable the police to effectively carry out exclusive night patrols when the community is asleep. It is with the use of 'night guards' that most communities were able to scare away potential criminals and reduce the menace of armed robbery to a minimum level. In view of this, we can posit that vigilantism has succeeded in complementing the effort of the state police in the process of community policing thereby somewhat improving the safety of lives and property.

#### **Research Methodology**

The methods of data collection used in this study were questionnaire and focus group discussions (Quantitative and Qualitative methods). These methods of data collection and analysis were chosen in order to ensure effective analysis of the research topic. As the topic implies, the perception of the public on the workings and level of effectiveness of the two security apparatus were harvested through a semi-structured questionnaire with a 3-option answer ('Yes', 'Undecided/Sometimes' and 'No'). A space is given after each question to serve as 'explanatory index' in order to capture the degree of divergence of opinion of all respondents to each question. This corrected the limitation of the inability of the structured questionnaire framework to track progress over time or take into account varying qualities or quantities of particular attributes due to the multitude of 'Yes/No' questions adopted. The data gathered were analyzed using simple percentage and graphical illustrations to show direction of public perception. On the other hand, series of focus group discussions were organized to harvest the views of both institutions of security on the relationship that exist between them. This exploratory method made the data collection flexible and permitted the probing of participants in order to appreciate the underlying assumptions and beliefs that inform their views on the subject matter.

At this juncture, it is worthy to put on record that the participants of the focus group discussions requested for confidentiality and anonymity because of the nature of the subject matter (security). In the satisfaction of research ethics, the research strictly adhered to the pledge of protecting the identities of the respondents.



### Sampling Size and Strategy

The study took place in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria covering the five Local Governments Areas that make up the Ilorin Emirate (i.e. Ilorin South LGA, Ilorin West LGA, Ilorin East LGA, Asa LGA and Moro LGA). 300 questionnaires were distributed using 'probability proportionate to population size' (PPPS) of each area to ensure that the more populated areas have proportionally greater probability of being chosen into the sample as shown in the table below:

**Sampling Local Government Areas with Corresponding Questionnaires Allotted**

S/N	Local Government Areas	Population (2006 Census)	No. of Questionnaires Allotted
1.	Asa	124,668	37
2.	Ilorin East	207,462	61
3.	Ilorin South	209,251	62
4.	Ilorin West	365,221	108
5.	Moro	108,715	32
		<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>300</b>

Source: Author's computation

The method of choosing respondents (i.e. the Sample Design) is based on *clustered, stratified, multi-stage, and area probability* sampling in the following order:

- We first stratified the sampling city (Ilorin) according to its local governments identifying those in urban and rural location. The essence of this stratification is to reduce the possibility of missing out specific ethnic groups especially the minorities in the sample.
- We then identified the *Secondary Sampling Units* (SSUs) i.e. choosing the areas to be sampled. This comprised of those located in both urban and rural areas. In some cases, we oversampled certain populations that are politically significant especially the urban sampling units (Ilorin city centre). This is in line with the PPPS techniques adopted for the sampling process.
- The next stage was the random selection of the *Primary Sampling Units* (PSUs) i.e. choosing the community to be sampled in each of the SSUs.
- Having located the PSUs, we then randomly selected our *Sampling Start Points* (SSPs). Standing at the SSP, the questionnaire administrators proceeded to randomly select Households on which the questionnaire was administered. Within the household, the administrators randomly selected an individual respondent. The response of this respondent was taken to be the view of the entire household in order to accommodate more households in the sampling process. The administrators alternated their respondents in each household to ensure gender balance in the samples.

In all, 288 questionnaires were used for the analysis while the rejected 12 were mutilated, answered wrongly or not returned. Out of the 288 respondents, there were 177 male which accounted for 61.5% and 111 female equivalents to 38.5% of the sampled population. Four focus groups discussions (FGD) with a total of 18 participants were staged with the help of two research assistants. Two of the FGDs were with 8 officers of the Nigerian police drawn from the state headquarters and three other divisions whose years in service range from 10-21 years. The remaining two were with 10 members of two vigilante groups whose years in service range 8-19 years (excluding the period in state security agencies for 4 ex-service men among them). One was employed by a government institution while the other was providing security service to private individuals in a gated estate. The four discussions were intertwined thus: vigilante under government employment, police, vigilante under private employment and finally the police. This arrangement makes room for counter response to earlier argument of each apparatus as depicted in the research findings.

The FGDs commenced from the introduction of the research team and participants and sequentially graduated to comparative and loose topic guide, which 'translated' the research questions into topics for discussion and exploration. The responses gave insights into salient themes and issues which were subsequently refined into a more structured 'question guide'. This comprised a set of key questions and allowed for a more focused data collection. All questions were put to the participants in an open manner, encouraging them to relate, discuss and jointly reflect on and interpret their experiences and views. The research team recorded the responses using written method. Voice recording was not used to enable the respondents have confidence that their identities were obscured. This was worthwhile because it encouraged them to air their views freely without any reservation and resentment.

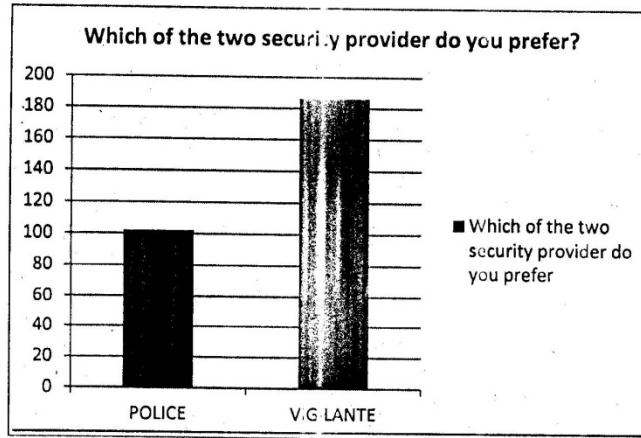
### **Research Findings**

#### **i. Public Perception of State and Non-State Security Providers in Ilorin Metropolis**

The citizens domiciled in Ilorin and by extension, Nigeria greatly attach importance to the issue of security in their environment. Having met the basic needs of lives- food, clothing and shelter, they take safety and security as next priority. This validates the theory of hierarchy of needs as propounded by Abraham Maslow. These priorities for safety and security are hinged on the expectation of protection from security service providers on security of property from theft and destruction; prevention of violent conflicts arising from criminal tendencies and ethno-religious rows; personal safety from criminals; protection from harm associated with thuggery; eradication of intimidation, threat and brutality; and peaceful environment devoid of anti-social vices among others. There is no consensus of opinion among the people on which security provider will better meet their expectation to the maximum satisfaction. To measure public perception on this, the respondents were technically asked on which of the two security providers is most effective. The question was put

#### *Rivalry or Partnership Policing?: Harvesting the Gains of the State*

thus: "If you are in a position of authority to determine and hire security operative, which one will you prefer?" The option was limited to either police or vigilante. This is done to capture the exact preference for one provider and not those who will prefer the combination of both. The harvested response is graphically illustrated below:



*Source: Author's computation of data from administered questionnaire*

Out of the 288 respondents, 102 people prefer to be protected by the police representing 35.4% of the sampled population, while 186 people prefer vigilante security apparatus which accounted for 64.6% of the respondents. Those who prefer vigilante guards premised their choice on the fact that the vigilante personnel are honest, trustworthy, committed to their job and relatively cheaper to acquire and that they are capable of preventing the occurrence of armed robbery in the first instance. The 102 people who want police protection opined that the state security personnel are more qualified to tackle criminal tendencies because of their high quality training, intelligence gathering capability, modern sophisticated weaponry, and above all, they are legally recognized to perform such a task.

When confronted with this finding during one of the focus group discussions, a senior police officer attributed the people's preference for vigilante to two factors. First, that most people prefer jungle justice which is the main principle of vigilantism; while the police proceeds to investigation after arrest to be sure that an innocent person is not punished for an offence he/she did not commit. Second, that people like the condition which they can control but dislike the one beyond their individual manipulation. He submitted that the employer of vigilante guards can manipulate them to serve his selfish interests, even at the expense of violating the code of conduct of vigilantism and ethics of security provision. This position is found

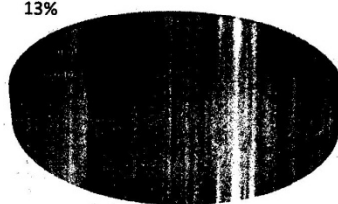


in the responses of some respondents in the 'explanatory index' when asked 'why' they have preference for their choice. They noted that they can interact directly with the vigilante personnel and also change their workings as a result of the flexibility of their modus operandi. In addition, they claimed that the police are fond of collecting money from alleged offenders or suspects and subsequently releasing them on the basis of having 'no case' against them.

The use of 'African traditional charms' in African vigilantism deserves consideration. Several instances were reported about the effective use of 'charms' in the historical narrations of primordial African states especially before colonialism and during colonial defensive. However, one may question the effectiveness of these 'charms' in the present modern age of civilization. This led to the second question to respondents that: "Do you believe in effectiveness of African traditional means of policing using 'charms' in this age of civilization?" The response is illustrated below:

### Effectiveness of African traditional means policing using 'charms' in this age of civilization

UNDECIDED  
13%



Source: Author's computation of data from administered questionnaire

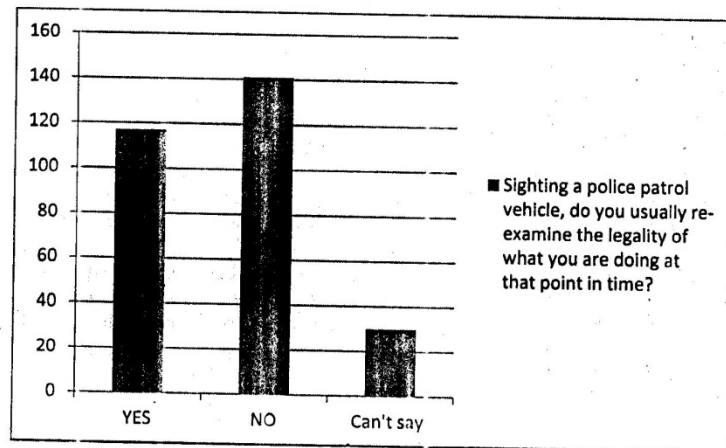
192 respondents (amounting to 67%) believe that African traditional charm is still effective as a means of policing in Ilorin. 20% of the respondents totaling 57 people believe it is no more effective while 39 people (13%) reserved comment by choosing 'Undecided'. It is interesting to note that there is variation between the respondents' belief in relation to preference for the choice of service provider. 144 out of the 186 respondents (77.4%) who prefer vigilante security apparatus believe in the effectiveness of the African charms while 13 (8.1%) opposed this notion. The remaining 27 people (14.5%) did not know whether it is still effective in

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contemporary times. This shows that some prefer the vigilante security because of reasons other than possession of African charms. On the other hand, some respondents who preferred to be protected by the police still believe in African traditional charms as an effective means of policing. This group accounted for 47.1% (i.e. 48 people) of the 102 people that want police protection. 42 respondents (41.2%) believe that the effectiveness of the African charms as a means of policing is nothing but a myth, while 12 people (representing 11.8%) are undecided on the subject matter.

All vigilante participants of the two focus group discussions attested to the effectiveness of African charms. They reported that they use it to prevent robbery incidences and also use it to protect themselves. A man showed us the one he put on his waist which he claims protects him from bullets. It is called '*ayeta*' meaning 'bullet proof'. Another participant informed us about another one called '*okigbe*' which disallows machete, dagger, and cutlass or other sharp object like a row and spear from penetrating the skin. Other forms of charms mentioned include '*egbe*' (to disappear), '*kanako*' (speed), and '*ihiju*' (seeing beyond the surface, also used to identify criminals) amongst others. Interestingly, they confided that many police officers do consult them to make these charms. However, the police participants while admitting that some officers use these charms, refuted the claim of effectiveness of these charms and gave instances where their colleagues (names and details withheld) were killed during armed robbery confrontations despite the use of African charms especially '*ayeta*'. When informed about the officers' perception of the ineffectiveness of the '*ayeta*', the vigilante men countered their claim on two grounds. First, there is taboo attached to each 'charms' which the users must avoid. Any user who consciously or unconsciously flouts the taboo will have the potency of his 'charms' ruined. Second, there are instructions on its usage which must be strictly adhered to. Any mistake in the usage, especially in the pronouncement of the incantations would render impotent such a charm. They argued that the slain officers must have violated any of these two conditions. Going by the empirical findings of this research, there is no doubt that the African traditional charms are still effective in contemporary times. Although those who refute this claim based their decision on religious beliefs, the proponents of its effectiveness drew a line of demarcation between religion and reality.

The effectiveness of the state police in crime prevention was challenged by the respondents on the ground that whenever there is a robbery incidence and the police is informed, their habit of blowing the siren usually makes the robbers flee. Consequently, the arrival of the police at the scene more often than not becomes useless because the criminals would have done the damage. Most respondents also noted that the appearance of the police despite their weapons and legal backing is not suffice to prevent the criminal activities. This perception is inferred from their response to the question that: *Sighting a police patrol vehicle, do you usually re-examine the legality of what you are doing at that point in time?*



Source: Author's computation of data from administered questionnaire

Out of the 288 respondents, 117 people accounting for 40.6% ticked 'yes'. On the other hand, 141 respondents (49%) ticked 'no', while 30 people representing 10.4% of the sampled population cannot say whether they are intimidated or not. The validity of this notion is further tested and corroborated by another question that: *Sighting a police officer, are you usually gripped by fear?* The responses as tabulated below shows that only 21 respondents (7.3%) are afraid of the police while a whopping number of respondents (189 representing 65.6%) are not in any way afraid of the police and 78 people (27.1%) are sometimes afraid of the police.

<i>Sighting a police officer, are you usually gripped by fear?</i>		
Responses	Respondents	% of Respondents
YES	21	7.3
NO	189	65.6
SOMETIMES	78	27.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author's computation of data from administered questionnaire

This shows that most people did not fear the police. This can be used to explain the reason why there is high confrontation of the police by the people on daily basis. People want to assert their right when challenged by the police but are willing to comply with the directives of the vigilante personnel when challenged.



ii. **Relationship Between State and Non-State Security Providers in Ilorin Metropolis**

The relationship between the Nigerian police and the vigilante is traced to the period of the establishment of the Nigerian police on April 1, 1930. However, the emergence of Mohammed Dahiru Abubakar (the Inspector General of Police) as the Kwara State Commissioner of Police in 2003 brought the relationship to a turning point of reference. Before his posting, the relationship was reported to have been extremely hostile as three officers admitted during the focus group discussions. This hostile relationship was not limited to the vigilante but also with the other state security agencies especially the Nigerian Army. During the reign of Laval Gazali (M.D. Abubakar's predecessor), there was a stiff conflict between the Kwara police command (especially the Police Mobile Force- PMF- popularly called MOPOL) and the Kwara command of the Nigerian Army which was borne out of superiority struggle. While the Nigerian Army claims to be the number one security agency in Nigeria, the police see it as a common boundary guard. The police hierarchy did little or nothing toward rapprochement perhaps because there was nothing that could be done or the top officers deliberately wanted the PMF to prove its combatant worth. The participating officers admitted that the arrival of M.D. Abubakar brought about synergy between the police and other security agencies. This rapprochement was extended to the police-vigilante relations.

The relationship at that period was outstanding because M. D. Abubakar launched joint operations of the two security outfits to combat highway armed robbery especially along Share, Bode Saadu roads amongst others. The police registered all personnel of the non-state security operatives under the 'Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN)' and issued licences for the use of their locally made fire-arms. The VGN members were issued identity cards and were mandated to operate in their official uniforms. However, the cordial relationship did not last long as the officers alleged that the vigilante personnel bastardized the opportunity by individually recruiting security operatives working under them without police authorization, bearing fire-arms without license, and operating without uniforms. The registered VGN members became agents of vigilante employers which led to the formation of proliferated Community Vigilante Groups (CVGs) as it is witnessed till date. This resulted in the recruited members engaging in criminal activities such as extortion, raping, robbery and intimidation among others. The unwillingness of the police to condone these atrocities led to the withdrawal of the joint operation. This made the relationship between the two securities to become hostile as there were cases where the police would arrest vigilante members for offences ranging from illegal possession of fire-arms, assault on arrested suspects and so on. The Kwara police command no longer trusted the VGN and CVGs in the provision of adequate security. The police also alleged that most of the recruited members may have criminal records as the CVGs are not interested in thorough screening as the VGN did in the past.

The vigilante participants admitted that their relationship with the police is somewhat hostile. This is premised on the fact that the suspects they arrested are usually handed over to the police for prosecution. However, they said they do not trust the police because these suspects are released by the police after collecting money from them. One vigilante guard alleged that since they have no power and courage to visit the police station to verify the level of the prosecution because of the fear of being arrested and detained, the police operate without fear of being checked. They however, admitted that this is not the case in all matters as one suspect they handed over to the police is presently serving jail term at the Nigeria prison at Oke-Kura in Ilorin. When confronted with the allegation of releasing suspects after obtaining money from them, the police refuted the claim that those released were as a result of thorough investigation which proved them to be innocent. A police officer subsequently alleged that the vigilante are fond of arresting, intimidating and illegally punishing innocent people who due to circumstances beyond their control move around at odd hours.

Despite this mutual distrust and mistrust, both security providers do work together. The police do take over arrested suspects for prosecution and obtain statements from the vigilante members as evidence in court. In some cases, the vigilantes are invited as witnesses in court to testify against the accused. An officer at the Police Headquarters confirmed that the Commissioner of Police gives special commendation and rewards exceptional vigilante men from the Police Reward Fund (PRF). He gave the instance of an incident that happened during the reign of Oshodi Glover (as Kwara Commissioner of Police) along Kilanko road where a vigilante man engaged in combat and arrested a group of notorious robbers with the use of a machete. The Police unit recommended him to the Commissioner of Police, who rewarded the man with cash and also purchased a locally made fire-arm for the man with a licence for its usage.

#### Challenges Hindering the Effectiveness of the State Security Provider (Nigerian Police)

The challenges militating against the effectiveness of the police as identified by the participants of the focus group discussions and the researcher's wisdom include but are not limited to:

- i. Politicization of the force
- ii. Favouritism and Nepotism in the appointment and promotion exercise which led to the maxim 'appointment is better than rank'
- iii. Back biting, and hypocrisy in relations among rank and file.
- iv. Systemic corruption
- v. Unhealthy rivalry with other state security agencies thereby encumbering synergy among them in the fight against crime
- vi. Inadequate funding
- vii. Inadequate logistic infrastructure

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- viii. Manpower shortage in relation to the population they police.
- ix. Inadequate ICT equipments to gather and analyze intelligence information
- x. Low wages compared to other security forces especially the military
- xi. Too much deductions from salary.
- xii. Lack of maintenance culture which leads to the rickety conditions of police equipments especially patrol vehicles.
- xiii. Wrong public information which usually leads to the arrest of innocent people, amongst others.

#### **Challenges Hindering the Effectiveness of the Non-state Security Provider (Vigilante)**

The vigilante security apparatus also has challenges inhibiting its effectiveness and efficiency. A number of these challenges as identified by the participants of the focus group discussions, complemented by literature (especially Alemika and Chukwuma, 2004:6-7) and the researcher's wisdom include but are not limited to the following:

- i. Over reliance on African traditional charms for protection which might have become impotent as a result of unconscious violation of their taboos.
- ii. Lack of funding by government, except in some local governments where they were employed and placed on monthly salaries to mount vigilance on major roads where police patrol is not provided.
- iii. Lack of government support which makes them to have an inferiority complex compared to other security providers especially the Nigerian Civil Defense Corps, Nigerian Legion and Sheriff Guard.
- iv. Politicization of the security personnel which leads to their use as weapon of political intimidation, oppression and thuggery.
- v. Harassment and extortion by the police when carrying out their duties, often over their use of locally-made guns.
- vi. Disincentive as a result of the release of suspects handed over to the police.
- vii. Lack of basic operational equipment, such as flashlights, warm clothing, rain coats and boots, whistles, uniforms, identity cards etc.
- viii. Lack of compensation for loss of lives during active service and in the cases of injuries suffered in the cause of performing their duties.
- ix. Lack of recognition by local government authorities in some localities.
- x. Lack of recognition by the police authority which leads to their being perceived as criminals.
- xi. Proliferation and multiplicity of organizations.
- xii. Poor screening of new members.
- xiii. Manpower shortage in relation to the population they police.
- xiv. Lack of representation of women and non indigenes in their structures



- xv. Poor accountability and discipline among rank and file.
- xvi. Lack of a clear organizational structure to depict standard and procedural method of recruitment, promotion and pension.
- xvii. Possession of locally-made weapons without valid licences
- xviii. Contribution to the widespread cases of ethnic, religious and communal violence in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

This paper attempted to measure public perception on which security provider is more effective using Ilorin metropolis as a case study. Based on the answers provided by the respondents, we inferred that the vigilante security apparatus is more effective although, the difference between the percentage of people who shared this view with that of the police (as more effective) does not validate the fact that the police is totally ineffective. This means that the police are also effective to some extent. It also examines the nature of the relationship between the two security providers in the wake of the legal framework which criminalizes non-state actors' possession of fire-arms without licence. It is discovered that the relationship between the two security providers is characterised by mutual distrust. This is premised on the fact that the police who are constitutionally empowered to protect citizens' lives and property are accused of not performing up to expectation as a result of persisting challenges. This made citizens to turn to the non-state security providers who are observed to be more effective in providing protection at a relatively cheap cost. However, the police in an attempt to check the excesses of the vigilante security apparatus are alleged to be sabotaging the effort of the vigilante out of envy of their perceived success.

It is observed that despite the achievements and success stories of the two security providers, both are hindered in their activities by certain challenges. In view of this, efforts must be put in place to address these challenges. However, in order to tap into the positive impact of both providers, it is strongly recommended that there should be a paradigm-shift from the inherited European model of policing to a partnership between state and non-state security providers; by blending contemporary policing strategies with the African traditional methods of policing. This call for the incorporation of the two apparatus to form community policing and supported by many scholars is premised on the increased concern that the prevailing modern system of state policing is failing to addressing contemporary criminal activities (see Obaro, 2003:262; Samuel, 2012; Alemika and Chukwuma, 2004; Brogden, 2004; Ikuteyiyo and Rotimi, 2010; Inyang and Abraham, 2013; Pam Sha, 2005; Okeshola and Mudiare, 2013). It is believed that this new paradigm has the potential to serve as the model for a drastic reform of the entire criminal justice system.

For community policing to be effective, the two providers should be strengthened putting their areas of comparative advantage into consideration. The rationale behind the call for the incorporation of the vigilante security apparatus into the mainstream policing is premised on the fact that they are mostly indigenes of the

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local communities where they operate. This means they have in-depth knowledge of the community and are more conversant with the environment and terrain. This will make it easier for them to gather intelligence information than the police. The Nigerian Security Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC) which is empowered to register them should be strengthened to also closely monitor them by absorbing them as a department under NSCDC. The process of recruitment should be subjected to ratification of the NSCDC which will consider the background and past record of prospective recruits.

On the part of the police, the ongoing reform should be maintained and sustained. Officers should be re-orientated to recognize and protect the fundamental human rights of the people, suspects and criminals and avoid all acts that usually make people to have a negative perception of them. Government should increase the funding of the security sector which will enable the sector to recruit new officers and train the existing ones. If their salaries and other welfare package are substantial, it will not only encourage them to be committed but will motivate citizens to join the sector (at both state and non-state levels).

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