A Conceptual Appraisal of Citizen Policing, the Nigerian Media and Communication Vision 2020

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Abstract

The term 'policing' means different things to different people but there is a meeting point for everybody. The meeting point is when 'policing' is understood and implemented by everybody as a network not just for the law enforcement agents. The media and communication are critical components at this point. This goes beyond sending messages or interpersonal communication among stakeholders; it includes having a functional communication framework understood by everybody for a common development goal. National development goals in Nigeria are critically postulated and activated through communication policy and the media. In 2009, the Nigerian government, for the first time, tried to articulate a national media and communication vision. A National Technical Working Group was constituted and the group articulated a Vision2020 which divided the entire sector into 11 sub-sections for proper visioning. In the last two decades, Nigeria has witnessed diverse security and development challenges, mostly at community level which require improved policing. The Critical Discourse is used as a theory here to interrogate the complexity on meaning of 'citizen policing' while challenging reductionism, dogmatism and dichotomies. Through the process of self-reflection, the term 'critical' means not taking policing for granted. Therefore, the study is proposing alternatives to the understanding of policing as also part of being critical of the2009 Report via the development communication praxis. It is concluded that Nigeria can improve the current abysmal development indices by designing and implementing "participatory" policies to complement the media and communication Vision 2020.

Keywords: *Policing, Reconceptualization, Development, Communication, Media*

Introduction

The mainstay of a nation and its political system is the presence of virile communication and information institutions championed by a responsive media (Ismail&Tenuche, 2012, p.239). This 'mainstaying', andevery citizen having access to tangible and accurate information is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the Africa Charter on Human and People's Rights of 1981, and comparatively in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The media is one of the social institutions making up part of thesocietal conflicts and, apparently, insecurity discourses. According to Ibrahim and Kabiru (2012, p.207), reporting conflicts is a responsibility that the media must carry-out as they unfold [to ensure peaceful society].

Implicitly, the media has the duty to police happenings in the society; and thisduty is well defined in the Social Responsibility Theory according to McQuial (1994, p.124).Ironically,in Nigeria, the media has always been accused of escalating or distorting conflict/ security matters. Such media action is argued to continue topolarize Nigerians along ethnic, regional, religion or political affiliation (John &Jeno- Mary (2001, p.73). The Nigerianmedia often perform in the convergence water of the government and the citizens, whileinforming, educating, mobilizing, sensitizing and enlightening on thematic and or general development issues (Ismail &Tenuche, 2012, p.240) just as government can never exist without thecitizens. Matthew Taylor (2012 in Ismail & Tenuche, 2012, p.240) argues that the citizens are the untapped resources by the government for good governance. Hence, it is expected that the media create and nurture formidable meeting platforms for critical interaction for the effective policing of thesociety. Further, a critical positive relationship between the government and the citizens is exemplified by Durkheim's Theory of Social Integration which states that lack of positive interaction (media, government and the public) and acceptance of (all stakeholders) has negative consequences for an individual, the family, or the community.

Presence of negative interaction attracts acts of violence with direct impacts on societal development.Therefore, the current

insecurity and lack of national integration in Nigeria cannot be separated totally from under-policing or uncoordinated policing. Hence, Weiner as cited in Ogunojenite (1987) and Ojo (2009) argues that the most pressing problem of developing nationsis not really economic but how to achieve integration.There are different policing organizations in every community. A few of these organizations in Nigeria are the Nigeria Police, the local vigilante groups, and some private security agencies.These organizations play vital roles in the past, present, and future trends of policing in the changing nature of societal life style and crimes in Nigeria. The environment of policing is interplaying with these changes in public opinion about the police, new technology development, public and private sector managerial innovations,the media, and new types of offense. Over two-decades (beginning from 1990), the Nigerian government has attempted to change its police management styles but things still remain ugly in this aspect. However, the experiencesfromthe reformation attempts were lessons for the advocacy for proactive 'preventive' rather than the existing 'reactive' policing inNigeria through inclusive and collaborative communication approaches.In view of this, in 2009, a Media and Communication Thematic Group was inaugurated as part of the National Technical Working Groups (NTWGs) to produce an inclusive communication policy document that will fast track national integration.

The Media and Communication Thematic Group was made up of 24 regular members under the chairmanship of Dr. Tom Adaba. The committee's report provided strategic insights into many development issues for sustainable national integration. Many years later, after this report has been submitted,Nigeria continues to experience community violence, urban crimes, insurgency attacks and religious groups agitations. Invariably, the media has been in the middle of all these. Thus, the extent to which the Media and Communication Thematic Report has reflected in all these challenges requires a critical review for the effective security communication in Nigeria.

Statement of the Research Problem

For some years now, Nigeria has had little of the security infrastructure associated with a modern nation state; the life for the vast majority of the people has been harsh and short partly due to the increasing waves of crimes. In most cases, when these security challenges are discussed or reported by the media, the contents are more of invectives than critical analyses.Globally, two of the fundamental steps towards sustainable national integration are thecreation of a critical communication system and the development of inclusive media content. That is possible through theconstant review of existing policy documents and institutions.One of the national development documents that deserve such critical review is theReport of the Vision2020 National Technical Working Group on Media and Communications. The critical review is essential now that Nigeria is striving to re-position its policing system.

Aim

The aim of this paperis to critically conceptualize 'policing' within the purview of the media inclusive and national integration agenda for sustainable development.

Objectives

To achieve the stated aim, the following objectives are espoused:

i) Criticallyreview the Report of the Vision 2020 National Technical Working Group on Media and Communications with special attention to 'security' reporting, development and communication.

ii) Conceptualize 'policing' as a collective 'duty and 'obligation' via responsive communication and information networking.

Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis was appropriated as a theory rather than an approach to discuss the complexities in citizen policing in this paper. The 1985 Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's critical discoursetheory (sometimes abbreviated to discourse theory) was relied on for discussion of the term 'citizen policing' as a discursiveconstruction. This approach was selected from the range

of different perspectiveswithin discourse analysis on the groundsthat we think that it represents particularly fruitful theoretical expositions on researches in communication,culture and society. Consequently. the theory was not used as an analytical tool for pure texts in this paper.The overall idea of the critical discourse theory as used in this paper is that social phenomena (such as policing, security, citizen rights, etc.) arenever finished or total in terms of what they mean or require from members of the society to use them effectively.

Meaning can never be ultimately fixed and thisopens up the way for constant social struggles about definitions ofsociety and identity, with resulting social effects.Laclau and Mouffe developed their theory through the *deconstruction*of other bodies of theory by carefullyreading other theories.They contend and uncover their unargued assumptions and internal contradictions. In this way, the theory provides a framework for a *systematic* analysis by establishing the arguments of this paper beyond speculation because the document under review is a 'policy' paper.

The Report of the Vision 2020 National Technical Working Group on Media and Communications

Communication media are channels through which ideas, thoughts, cultural products and even security issues are transmitted from the sender to the recipients. For result and people-orientedpolicing in modern Nigeria, participatory communication must be engaged and targeted at some specific objectives. According to the *Media and Communication Report, Vision 2020,* "A monolithic press, for instance, in a pluralistic country like Nigeria will threaten democracy. With its plural socio-political character, it is healthy and natural that Nigeria should have plural media institutions" (2009, p.9). Someof the development challenges identified by the report include: (i). Near absence of industry data; (ii). Lack of professional and ethnic standard among industry operators; (iii). Perception gap between the media and government; (iv). Absence of supportive infrastructure and (v). Poor access to information. The important question here is that among all the listed challenges,

none specifically highlighted the relationship between the 'media' 'communication' and 'security' reporting. More intriguing is the fifth challenge which expresses lack and poor access to information. Meanwhile, there was no clear statement on who is facing the challenge on access to information. Again, (paragraph 3, page 9) of the same report articulated the following vision statement to help mitigate the identified challenges.The vision is to be:

> A professional industry in a pluralistic environment, with deep commitment to *promoting* democracy, accountability, and guided by solid sense of ethics and responsibility, while enhancing national development (RV2020NTWG,2009:9).

From the above, it is curious that the vision is in no way directly *promoting* 'national security'. But why using the word *'promoting'* and not *'ensuring"*? For *'ensuring'* encapsulates more 'rights' and 'obligations' than 'duty' to actually spur media practitioners and the police collaboration on security reporting. In fact, no single objective (page 9-10) among the eight also set out to actualize the vision carries specific reference to national security of which policing is an integral part. According to RV2020NTWG (2009, p.11):

> …the Nigerian media has evolved into a lead agency in undertakingcrucial social tasks like public agitation for socio-political changes and advocacy; and playing such other roles in the public sphere. In the course of playing these roles, the media has been faced with fluid and changing socio-economic and political dynamics. Understandably, these dynamics, in turn, have considerably affected the capacity of the Nigerian media to sufficiently respond to its social responsibilities of building platforms for national dialogue, mobilizing the Nigerian people through mass *enlightenment* to participate in national development programmes, and pointing to opportunities for citizens' engagement in productive activities within the economy, as well as rising to the challenge of countering negative portrayals of Nigeria, and indeed, Africa, by some international media channels.

From the above, it could be deduced that the Nigerian media needs to organizeitself around the identified shortcomings by upscaling

its communication strategy and content development especially for the 'enlightenment' of the citizens to participate in national development programme (including security and safety) communications. It is important to iterate here that Nigeria has tried a number of national development models which have not driven sustainable 'citizenship' communication strategy and media coverage of security issues. The most memorable development plan of the 80s could be said to be MAMSER- an acronym for Mass Mobilization for Self-Reliance, Social Justice and Economic Recovery. The programme was inaugurated on July 25, 1987. Its mission was to cultivate support for the transitional programme of the military government.It was also an avenue to educate the citizens about the political process, mobilize them to participate in up-coming elections and political debates, and also inculcate dependence towards locally made goods and Nigerian products. Some of MAMSER's official policies include to:

> i) Re-orient Nigerians to shun waste and vanity.
> ii) Shed all pretenses of affluence in their lifestyle,
> iii) Propagate the need to eschew all vices in public life, including corruption, dishonesty, electoral and census malpractices, ethnic and religious bigotry.

This agency was popular among rural and urban Nigerians because part of the communication strategies used for mobilizing Nigerians was Theatre for Development (TfD) – a participatory learning tool of the Development Communication. Meanwhile, MAMSER has been renamed the National Orientation Agency (NOA). It is disturbing to note that the NOA with a huge presence spanning across all 774 local governments in Nigeria does more of 'branding' while neglecting 'dialogical participation' to build patriotic Nigerians. In the last 10 years, the agency has deployed many television and radio announcements mostly as 'reacting' mechanisms to the menaces of killing, insurgencies, kidnapping, robbery, public fund mis-management, child molestation, gender violence, rape and other social vices without significant progress. Branding a product that has no significant space in the consciousness of the consumers is like selling rotten meat that no one would buy.

First, Nigerians must 'dialogically participate' in the affairs of their country through real patriotism which could be later enshrined in the social relationship of the people.On a general note, the movement toward community policing has gained momentum in recent years world-wide as police and community leaders search for more effective ways to promote public safety and to enhance the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Community policing encompasses a variety of philosophical and practical approaches, and is still evolving rapidly. Community policing strategies vary depending on the needs and responses of the communities involved; however, certain basic principles and considerations are common to all community policing efforts. The development of thiscommunity policing framework presented policing organizations with an opportunity to contribute to the evolution and implementation of community policing.

The sharing of successes, failures, and frustrations was and will continue to be an inherent part of this process. While this paper is not really emphasizing community policing for Nigeria, understanding community policing will provide a conceptual framework of what is being advocated as improved communication strategy for policing Nigeria and expanding community media initiatives.For the scope of media and communication thematic area, the Vision 2020 Media and Communication Thematic Group assessed the industry under the following sub-sectoral profiles:

a) Media Education, including research and archival
b) Ethics and Regulations
c) Media Laws and Legislations
d) Media Economy, Management and Ownership, including international media economics.
e) Media Technology, Digitization and Spectrum Management
f) Film and Home Video/Cinema
g) Print Media, including newspaper, magazine and book publishing
h) Electronic Media, including television, radio, community radio and the new media,
i) Advertising and Public Relations

j) National Information Management
k) AppliedCommunication for Development, including Behavioural Change and
l) Development Communication.

Once again, it is amazing that 'security' was not listed here as one of the important sub-sectoral profiles that the Nigerian media should be interested in. Each of the profiled sub-section has its peculiar security challenges to be contented by the media, and Nigerian especially the emerging New Media. Thus, it is imperative that 'security' is categorically profiled in national communication policy. For instance, on page 17 of the Media and Communication Working Group Report, the following sectors were listed as *'key sectors'* that the Media and Communication must systematically interface with:

i. Information, Communication and Technology (ICT): to maximize the benefits of the Internet in boosting media content marketing in the evolving New Media environment.
ii. Education: to design a curriculum for the teaching of media studies at secondary school level.
iii. Manufacturing: to explore opportunities for the production of equipment and parts for printing presses, transmitters, video/audio recording and storing devices.
iv. Culture and Tourism: to promote Nigeria's huge endowments.
v. Science, Technology and Innovations: to adapt, modernize and innovate local technology for media content production.
vi. Foreign affairs: to present positive image of the country to the outside world (RV2020NTWG,2009, p.17).

It is reasonable to suggest here that the above list should include an option (vii) and should probably read: *"Security: to provide accurate and responsive security and safety information to Nigerians"*. It is important that Nigerians (media practitioners, owners and users) begin to understand that 'security' is a *'key sector'* that can be productive and sustained on their unwavering

patriotism and collective participation. Under the "Local Context of Media and Communication Industry" the report did not include, say, 'the dearth of viable local security programmes as part of the structural difficulties facing the industry (see page18-19 of the RV2020NTWG (2009). Generally, the key issues facing the media and communication sector as listed in the report are:

i. Operational Environment: high cost of imported production materials, technology and consumables.
ii. Poor Infrastructure: road networks, water, light, computer, etc. come at very high cost.
iii. Funding: with rapidly declining revenues from advert space sales, funding has become a real problem.
iv. Personnel training and retraining: high cost of training infrastructure, leading to poor personnel knowledge on current practices, and this has also impacted negatively on the quality of the industry's output.
v. Regulatory/ political environment: high-handed reaction of security agents to critical media reports and *non-passage* of the Freedom of Information Bill, among other factors, have helped to make the environment dangerous
vi. Inadequate community communication channels and broadcasting
vii. Incidence of cyber-crime, following the advent of the internet as a mass communication channel
viii. Lack of industry data (RV2020NTWG, 2009, p.28).

All these have combined to hinder the Nigerian media efficiency.It should be noted that item (v) should no more be seen in the light it was presented by the 2009 report because the Freedom of Information bill has since become a law in 2011. Furthermore, information on item (vi) is challenged by this researcher. This study disagreed with the submission that there are "inadequate community communication channels and broadcasting in Nigeria". It is upheld by this study that there are enough 'community communication channels' in Nigeria. Or else, what do we categorize the local village meetings, community festivals, church groups, Muslim community, family meetings, estate and ward meetings?They, or course, are community communication

channels. The challenges may be that they are not well organized, not aligned with lager society development priorities, poorly funded and usually operated without proper records.However, this paper agrees that 'there are no adequate community broadcasting' in Nigeria. But it is expedient to clear out what community radio or broadcasting is, and what obtains in Nigeria presently. Community broadcasting refers to both radio and television (Salazar & Hammer, 2008, p.180). For the purposes of this paper, the focus will be on community radio (that is probably the growing community media in Nigeria based on pockets of "university based" radio stations), and, therefore, the terms can be used interchangeably.According to Salazar and Hammer, (2008, p.181):

> The phrase "community radio" is widely used, but every individual community radio station is unique. Each is inextricably linked to the particular community that developed it and is tailored to the culture, concerns, history, and current events of the community it serves. Even so, it is possible to identify and distill certain good practices to which successful community radio stations adhere. In particular, successful community radio stations feature the following three characteristics: they have community ownership and orientation, they are nonprofit, and they are independent.

Of great interest is to know that community radio stations are owned, managed, and accountable to a community. The "community" can be defined by geography or interests. Communities can be large (as when a culturally or ethnically homogeneous group, or interest group, covers several local districts) or small, such as a village; and they can be in a large city or remote rural area (Salazar & Hammer, 2008, p.181). Dissenting opinions from within the community must be allowed to have a voice. The stations can be 'owned' by a community (for example, through NGOs, farmer groups, cooperatives, and grassroots organizations that elect the management of the station). But fundamentally, the operation of community radio stations should adhere to practices that promote community participation in its programming and operations.

The stations rely on volunteers from the community to produce and present on-air programmes and community news; to mobilize resources, and to operate and manage the station; to empower the listening audience to request topics to be discussed on the air; to hold regular community feedback to improve programming; and to involve youth in operating and managing the station.The community radio station is not run for profit, but it does mobilize resources to pay for operational costs. Indeed, fundraising may be encouraged. Finally, the stations should be non-partisan and non-sectarian and should be oriented to support the social development of the community they serve. From the foregoing, it should be made clear that in Nigeria as at 2017, what exist as 'community broadcasting' are university-based radio stations mostly in the urban centers.Though they could be said to be community based but they are managed by the university authority and programme production are not 'voluntary'.In most cases the stations are used to train mass communication students. Examples are the University of Lagos FM Radio, Akoka and the Ahmadu Bello University FM, Samaru, Zaria. Thus, there was inconsistency in the 2009 Media and Communication Report on the status of community broadcasting in Nigeria. This is evident on page 30 (with the sub-heading 'Community Radio Broadcasting') where it was submitted that:

> There is currently no community broadcasting in Nigeria. There has not been any deliberate policy to use rural broadcasting to drive communal sense of awareness in political, economic and socio-cultural issues (RV2020NTWG, 2009, p.30).

Meanwhile, same report earlier listed "inadequate community channels and broadcasting in Nigeria" as one of the challenges to media development. Though the report stated that Nigeria began electronic broadcasting in the late 1930s, and in the 60's had four (4) radio stations and an equal number of television stations: Nigeria as at April 2009 had 345 functional, 45 non-functional radio and TV broadcast stations, owned by government and private persons (RV2020NTWG, 2009, p.28). The electronic media is confronted with the following challenges:

i. Most of the stations are tied to political considerations and personalized by individuals, and among these are no community-based and run stations
ii. Local broadcast contents are not competitive enough and this prompts the public to tune to foreign channels.
iii. Absence of locally produced broadcast equipment and materials has led to their importation at high cost.

This paper is concerned about the information on item (ii) i.e. "Local broadcast contents *are not competitive enough* and this prompts the public to tune to foreign channels". Obviously, the local broadcast contents are not competitive enough.Many homes especially in the urban and sub-urban areas in Nigeria are connected and are still connecting to DSTV and other Direct Satellite Broadcasting (DSB) to view foreign 'soap' and news.It could therefore be projected here that if security programmes are responsively packaged, they could attract the Nigerianaudience and reduce foreign viewing. It is in that light this paper agreed to the submission of the Media and Communication Working Group Report -2009 which states that:

> The New Media or Citizen Journalism offers an alternative forum for other voices and viewpoint'. It also presents some convergence point for the print, television, radio and advertising aspects of mass communication (RV2020NTWG, 2009, p.30).

Apart from agreeing to the above submission, this paper equally believesthat applied communication can help Nigeria build a formidable 'citizen' and patriotic listeners and viewers to improve its national security.

Re-conceptualising Policing

Cybercrime is becoming a norm among young people in Nigeria and the many members of thesociety are gradually accepting this as another legitimate source of money. When foreigners are scammed it is common to hear something such as 'we are getting back what the Western world has taken from Africa especially through the slaveryand colonialism'.Meanwhile, Nigerians are

becoming more victims of cybercrimes too. Lots of family members both educated and uneducated, rich or poor, rural or urban settlers are directly or indirectly supporting their relatives who engage in cybercrimes.

This orientation is dangerous but could be turned around through consistent and appropriate human security reporting. According to *Human Security Now* (New York, 2003):

> Human security means protecting vital freedoms. It means protecting people from critical and pervasive threats and situations, building on their strengths and aspirations. It also means creating systems that give people the building blocks of survival, dignity and livelihood. Human security connects different types of freedoms – freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to take action on one's own behalf.

This paper agreed no lessto this definition. Though contemporary Nigeria media thinking on security could be manifestly influenced by international organizations pronouncements which link security with poverty reduction, Africa has antecedents of the concept of human security in some philosophies and discourses (e.g. those of Nkrumah and Senghor in West Africa) according to Hutchful and Fayemi (2004)). By and large, the Nigerian media must persistently espouse the consensus across Africa that security should be people-centered; security means, first and foremost, '**people's safety'** based on clear understanding of security and policing beyond the remedial terrain. This is reflected in the 1991 OAU Kampala document – *Towards a Conference on Security, Stability, Development and Co-operation in Africa*:

> Security embraces all aspects of the society including economic, political and social dimensions of individual, family, community, local and national life. The security of a nation must be constructed in terms of the security of the individual citizen to live in peace with access to basic necessities of life while fully participating in the affairs of his/her society in freedom and enjoying all fundamental human rights.

In practice, however, governments in Nigeria continue to consider security issues in terms of protecting the State, its institutions and frontiers, regime stability and military defence. This partly explains why the concept of human security in its current form has come to be considered as donor-driven especially where agencies set up to fight financial crimes are alleged to be funded by foreign governments. Whereas, human security represents an "ideal" or ultimate goal to which Nigeria must aspire through critical media coverage. There are many Nigerians who still consider 'security' the sole responsibility of the government.Nonetheless, in many contexts, violence and/or political disorder continue to be widespread, adding to the lack of confidence in the State's capacity to create the conditions for human security to be achieved in Nigeria.

It is therefore imperative that citizenshipmedia exists in Nigeriato mobilize the people to support responsivesecurity information gathering and dissemination. According to George Bernard Shaw; "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place" (Darrel et al., 2011, p.7) if the message has been passed. There are lots of media reports on security matters in Nigeria that will not just say 'anything' other than reporting the incidents. More and more Nigerians are striving to connect with foreign high-speed information and communication platforms which could give them critical analyses of security incidences than many Nigerian media.The penetration of mobile phones remains on the upward swing with about 94 per cent penetration in Nigeria, so citizens can read and contribute to security discussions from the comfort of their homes, once the contents are more critical and convincing. It is not easy for a single media to effectively connect with large segments of the public in an effort to enhance their knowledge of security in Nigeria for effective policing.This is especially challenging for the Nigeria Police which has no dedicated radio or has no strong content development with media houses. Yet, the police and other law enforcement agencies continue to wrestle with fund allocation, approval and release.

This has led to the often lamentation of the police management of loss of personnel; slow or no replacement of aging technology, vehicles, or equipment; and erosions in service. At times, the police need to be able to reach the entire community, and more frequently, a specific audience such as a neighborhood, young people, the elderly, or victims of a certain type of crime. Police must be able to communicate in different languages through the media that are most likely to connect with the audience they need to reach—all in a timely way. The Nigerian Communication Commission (NCC) reported that the number of connected telephone lines in Nigeria rose to 216 million between January and March 2016. This is a 6-million increase from 210 million in 2015.However, out of those 216 million lines that have been connected, only 149 million are active (*The Guardian Online*, 2016). This development poses a serious security challenge, say for instance the effective cyber-crime policing.

In 2016, the Nigerian government, realizing once again the importance of the media and communication in the development plans of the country re-opened the quest for a national policy on communication and media.Subsequently, the Nigerian Institute of Policy and Strategic Studies (NIPSS), Kuru, Jos constituted a professional stakeholders' forum where it was agreed that the country needs a national policy of media and communication (which is not yet in existence after a plan to have such policy was abandoned in 1986). The news media have traditionally been the primary method the Nigeria Police have used to communicate important messages to the public. The police hold news conferences, circulate press releases, or simply respond to newspaper, television, and radio reporters on items of interest. The news media continue to be an important method of communication for the Nigeria Police. But one thing has become increasingly clear:many newspaper readers and television viewers now turn to the "New Media" that is the cable television and social media—for information.

As the traditional news media develop business models that are more profitable, it has also become clear that effectively accessing

and using them is among the challenges the police must address. To effectively communicate with the public, the police must not only figure out how to use the traditional media more effectively with the New Media, they have to understand and master all of the new and emerging communications technologies. It could be argued that the Nigeria Police is not fully aware of the potential of how the public obtains security information at the community level. Apart from technical challenges, the Nigeria Police faces other communications hurdles as well. One of them is the complexity of the issues of security they must communicate effectively to the public.Some of thecomplexities in security communications are discussed below. Policing is a multifaceted initiative that involves handling calls for service, resolving disputes, controlling traffic, and many other activities.

The primary source of information on crime in Nigeria is public report mostly on offenses like (homicide, rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny, auto theft, and arson). Although this is indeed a positive trend on how many criminal cases are treated, a number of issues make talking about crime reduction in Nigeria more complicated recently. They include:

- **a.** The police and media reports usually include only those crimes reported to the police.
- **b.** Questions continue to be raised about the accuracy of the crime data reported by the police.
- **c.** In most cases police reports do not include computer crimes, identity theft, credit card and check fraud, narcotics offenses, and a plethora of other crimes that are reported to the police or are counted because an arrest has been made.

Crime is a far more complex phenomenon than statistics can portray. Individuals' experiences, both direct and vicarious, have a profound and distortional effect on their perceptions. Although crime reduction in Nigeria can be said to have taken center stage as a measure of police effectiveness (particularly with politicians), the police are engaged in a significant amount of work that is not directly related to crime but is important to an overall sense of safety. They spend a considerable amount of time dealing with traffic issues, handling calls for service, special events, disputes,

security alarm calls, and many other non-crime problems. How do these other activities fit within the overall perception of police effectiveness? Traditional measures that have taken a back seat to reported crimes include response time, traffic statistics on collisions and enforcement, case clearances, arrests, community problem-solving efforts, and overall citizen satisfaction. Where can the public find out about police performance in areas other than crime? How do the police effectively communicate about this aspect of their work? What should they be talking about? Answers to these, and many more questions are part of the challenges of security communication content developmentin Nigeria.

Officers have thousands of interactions with residents almost every day—responding to calls, attending community meetings, and making traffic stops. Those experiences create lasting impressions of police performance that is shared with family and friends. If people feel they were treated poorly and do not make a complaint, there is no opportunity to address the officer's behavior or explain why he or she behaved in that way.Many Nigerians with little or no personal contact with police form perceptions, as well, although they are shaped vicariously, through what they hear from friends and family and what they see in the news and entertainment media. This is particularly a difficult communication challenge for effective policing; as every interaction with the public, every news story, and every account of an encounter with the police relayed to family and friends contributes to their image and community perceptions of police effectiveness. How do they connect with the public in a way that allows them to talk generally about performance? What do the police need to do to ensure they have the opportunity to address concerns with both organizational and individual performance? Some of the answers to these interwoven questions can be inserted into media content on advocacy for improved public perception of the Nigeria Police.

Media critical reporting ofhow the Nigeria Police polices the country is important because it helps residents understand their role in relation to the police. Community policing, problem oriented policing, and intelligence-led policing, for example, are

labels for different ways of policing. People usually have little understanding of what these terms mean. How do officers on the street describe the department's approach to policing? Is it the same as the command level? What does the community take away from these descriptions? If the public are expected to be "partners" in the effort, what does their role entail? Is it just to call the police when they see something suspicious or have been a victim of a crime? Are they expected to be a part of crime watch? Or just patrol their neighborhoods? The media may be having challenges explaining the policing approach to the community due to its complicated nature in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Out of the increasing concern that the prevailing system of policing has failed in addressing contemporary crime problems, proponents of alternative policing believe a paradigm shift has the potential to serve as the model for drastic reform of the entire policing and security system in Nigeria. In this paper, 'community mobilization communication' (CMC) is espoused to inspire optimism that security agencies, the criminal justice system, including law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and corrections, could begin to function as seamless whole, with all elements working as partners with the people who have the most to gain or lose in making their neighborhood better and safer places in which to live and work. 'Community mobilization communication' system is not 'community policing' though both can be analysed on participatory principle of development. While community mobilization communication involves the participation of the community people in gathering and using information to 'prevent crime' through behavioural change and value system advocacy, 'community policing' is more of a technical arrangement in the police in partnership with the people to 'combat crimes' based on intelligence logistics and tact.Success in preventing social crimes depends on reaching and engaging a broad group of community people (women, men and youth at the individual, relationship, community and societal levels) through citizenship broadcasting and media content development.

Recommendations

From the foregoing, it is recommended that the Nigerian media should engage in the following to build Nigerians that will understand policing as a right and an obligation.

i. Facilitate a process of Social Change through critic reporting of security matters
ii. Use a Human Rights Framework of Crime News Reporting for communal clashes, crimes or unrests. This will empower the citizens to become committed participants in security communications.
iii. Promote community ownership of information and media content/programme development.
iv. Provide repeated exposure to modern crime prevention ideas and system.

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