

CULTURAL SOVEREIGNTY AND DIDACTICISM: CONTINUING COMMUNITY POLICING IN NIGERIA BY OTHER MEASURES

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ABSTRACT

The rate of insecurity in Nigeria is alarming, to the extent it has defied all conventional, including preventive and combative policing and security measures. This may not necessarily be due to the ineffectiveness of the conventional policing methods that replaced the traditional social control system from the colonial periods. However, the problem intensified by the interference of historical forces such as foreign religious proselytisation, colonial administration, economic and political exigencies, technology or modernity and the globalisation of the world. The community policing methods as recommended by scholars and stakeholders appear to be inadequate, because in spite of its introduction, the rate of crime has not waned considerably. This study therefore sets out to examine the point of departure from the traditional settings, the extent of change, the resilient elements of social control like ane and other festivals, ebo, abule, egwu, enyi, ugbo, among the Igalas. The egungun festivals at okemesi and atikpa among the Yorubas, the omabe and ogbilo festivals with reference, and how they can be examined towards complementing the community policing system. The study collected data from primary and secondary sources, using qualitative methods to analyse the data so gathered. Findings indicate that conventional policing and the community policing as proffered and practised cannot adequately assuage the crime rate in Nigeria. Cultural construction theory will be used to explain how culture is influenced and how it can be constructed to meet the needs of time. It recommends a re-examination of the social control mechanisms of the precolonial days towards determining the extent of its effectiveness and its suitability for crime control in Nigeria. It is advised that attention should be focused on both combative and preventive measures which the community policing system tends to promote.

Key words: Community Policing, Sovereignty, Didacticism, Social Control.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian society is enmeshed in various forms of conflict and criminality, which appears to have overwhelmed the conventional security approach, and further defied meaningful prescriptions, including the innovative community policing. The concept of community policing which received attention in the early post-millennium years, is a combination of preventive and punitive measures (Bucqueroux, 2007 in Kasali & Odetola, 2016). In spite of its shortcomings (Alemika & Chukwuma 2000 in Kasali & Odetola, 2016), community policing has assumed a zeitgeist in the management of conflicts, crime and criminality in the Nigerian society. Violence, crime and criminality have intensified despite the adoption of the policy of community policing. This phenomenon therefore invokes a reexamination of African civilization and its own mechanism for communication, and institutions for managing and resolving conflicts and preserving the fabrics of society for peaceful coexistence prior to colonization (Francis, 2016).

Undoubtedly, there was a modicum of centralization of powers represented by the feudal and quasi democratic institutions in the period preceding European colonization, which formed the column for the maintenance of peace and security. This research therefore examines the historical processes that linked the Nigerian society, which distorted the nature and practices of pristine traditional settings, and the role of socio-economic and political forces in the alteration of the dynamics of conflict and criminality. Thus, the study accentuates the problem which necessitates this research in the early part by showing the objectives of the study and the significance of study. It further clarifies concepts highlighted as the key note; it reviews the contribution of literature to the study and highlights area(s) of shortcoming of relevant literature. The instruments and institutions of social control are briefly assessed based on

findings; the elements of change, resilience and continuities in the societal social control system are examined, though briefly before the concluding remarks.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In view of the increasing conflicts and criminality in Nigeria, scholars and stakeholders have recommended amongst others, the introduction of community policing and invariably constitutional roles for traditional rulers. It suggests the necessity of accentuating moralistic culture and the transfer of sovereignty to the citizenry and traditional institutions. Community policing policy appears inadequate at curbing the rate of violent conflicts and criminality in the Nigerian society; this may not be far from the question of the custody of sovereignty and the absolutism it generates. Genuine efforts at efficient control of crime are marred by various factors, leading to increasing rate of crime.

Crime is at its heights in Nigeria; it has defied learned prescriptions and assumed the greatest source of national concern. The hullabaloo of community policing during the formative stage, appears to have waned in its appeal; this is in view of the unending question of political interests, and the immanent tendencies towards impunity. The conventional method of policing ascribe sovereignty to one unit of command or control, which is the state personified by the Inspector General of Police, while the community policing system to all intent and purposes, which ought to place custody of sovereignty in the hands of traditional institutions is not exempt from this irregularity either. Rules and regulations based on the natural/traditional system respect no body or group in the society, and are sustained by the elements of culture which in themselves emerged as a function of necessity. Past researches viewed the security architecture and the variables of findings remotely. This research views policing from the normative practices of pristine traditional Nigerian societies, where custody of sovereignty is removed from personalities, rather in institutions that are visible or sometimes mystical.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- i. What are the nature and practices of the traditional community policing system before the foreign incursion?
- ii. At what point were the elements of traditional social control altered?
- iii. What is the relationship between the alteration of precolonial societal values and the rate of crime and criminality in Nigeria?
- iv. Are there any prospects of exploring the traditional elements for complementing the community policing method?

4. OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

This research examines the character and practice of social control, which sustained the pristine Nigerian society and how they can be reawakened to complement the community policing system in Nigeria. The research adopts among other objectives:

- i. to determine the nature and practices of traditional community policing prior to the surge of historical processes that altered them.
- ii. To examine the point at which the elements of social control including the norms, values and beliefs were distorted.
- iii. To interrogate the relationship between the loss of values and the rate of crime, which necessitated the substitution of the conventional with community policing
- iv. To examine the prospects and challenges of alternative measures to crime prevention and control based on the system preexisting traditional systems.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

The rate of crime in the Nigerian society and those elements that affect the conventional policing system are on the increase; it calls to question whether the succeeding regime known as community policing can adequately assuage the security situation. In apparent terms, this research is necessitated by the facts that despite the introduction of community policing, insecurity and the rate of crime are on the increase. Also, policy planners and implementors will find the results of this research useful for improved planning and implementation in the face of daunting security challenges.

Past studies looked at the problem from the perspective of the power to enforce the law and to punish law breakers as adequate for mitigating crime and insecurity. However, this research is examining both the law, its implementors, the subjects and the elements that deter breach of the law by all stakeholders, within the realm of custodians, the agencies or officials and the citizenry. Past theoretical platforms have always tended to explain the causes and effects of crime and criminality from the modern perspectives, without due regards to the point of discontinuities from the centripetal norms, values and beliefs. Theoretical approaches in the past have focused on how the various elements or parts of the society contribute to the attainment of peace generally; however, they have neglected those elements, though intangible, that maintain the commitment and adherence of individuals and the society to societal norms in form of didactics.

Added to the theoretical detour is the fact that this research is based on empirical findings and the 'how' of societal developments in terms of security and policing in Nigeria. Therefore, attempt was made to historicise the precolonial, the colonial and the post-colonial development in terms of policing in Nigeria. It throws up new contours of thought, whether the increasing insecurity is a reaction to population increase and the technological advancement; whether those elements that sustained social justice in the past are jurisdiction inclined to affect all members of society irrespective of religious belief.

6. CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Sovereignty

The Aristotelian concern over the theory of sovereignty, regarding the residence of sovereignty with people or class or character casts some doubt over the universality of any particular definition of sovereignty. Definitions of the concept of sovereignty convincingly acknowledge a discipline-related approach, be it Politics or International Law, whichever context, however, sovereignty is referred to as an overall superintendent or authority in the policymaking process of the state and that preserves the guidelines of making rules, within political sovereignty (Fawcett, 2017). Akani, (2019) citing Oppenheim, has put it succinctly that sovereignty means supreme authority, or the independent power to act without subjection to no other authority. Sovereignty itself to some extent is subordinate to divine or natural laws which are pale in conventional policing methods that rely on law and enactments. Divine or natural laws are virtual in traditional settings, incarnated in the institutions and instruments that maintain social control, including the political and social structures.

During the colonial times, sovereignty which resided in the monarch and the council in centralized societies and also with the groups in quasi egalitarian settings was transferred to the colonial government after colonization (Ogbuabor & Okiche, 2017). The British pattern of policing cannot bear any different character than the British culture which ascribes animism, savagery and barbarous names to the African culture. At that point, the African, and particularly Nigerian societies lost their social control mechanism: those divine and natural

laws of retribution and beliefs (revered by the subjects and the superintendents or custodians), transmitted through didacticism to incoming generations washed-out. The abuse of power and the assumption of law unto themselves by the executives remove the dreads that were attached with divine and natural laws, which constrained abuses of any form. The crux of this research is whether the elements of divine or natural law can be refined to complement the community policing pattern? Sovereignty therefore, refers to the collective will of the people of any society symbolized in the government, to whose custody the maintenance of peace, security and welfare is vested. However, in the societal institutions, these elements backed up by the matrix that the voice of the masses is divine or natural and infallible.

Didacticism

Customs and traditions, beliefs, myths and ideas are transmitted to the next generation through arts, folklores with the motive of instructing the next generations and creating a social control. Didactics therefore are these instruments geared towards moral instruction, which convey the nature of man, the existence of rights and wrongs and the dos and don'ts (Casemert, 1987 in Effiom, & Timothy, 2017). In Africa, art and even literature as earlier highlighted are redolent with passing of moral instructions on societal values and keeping the younger generation abreast of gains of moral rectitude and the repercussions of deviation from societal standards.

The elevated vices in the society have rendered the didactic measures more important now than ever, because modernity, poverty and the quest for 'survival by all means' have aggravated loss of morals and integrity, involvement in social vices such as drug abuse and associated crimes. The government has not helped matters, especially where the custody of security is compromised in view of political interests, leading to the loss of confidence in government and its institutions. The government has been more liable in the infringement upon the rights of citizens than any individual or organization. A security system that does not engage the traditional cultural symbols like festivals, songs, proverbs, folklores and instruments (Lasisi & Koko, 2019) like the *egwu*, *abule*, *ugbo*, *enyi*, *ebo*, *ane* amongst other form of social control, and the maintenance of rules, values and social organisations cannot be reliable.

Social Control

An old sociological concept, the perception and definition of social control has undergone generational modification. More recently, during the late 19th and the early 20th Centuries, social control has been understood as the societal exigencies and its capability at ensuring and maintaining social order, especially without substantial exertion and necessity of violence (Deflem, 2015). Certain instruments serve as safeguards for breaches in the codes and regimes of any society, especially as a form of deterrent, corrective and punitive measure against indiscriminate disobedience and abuse of the law. To this extent, the American Sociologists view social control as features of society that rely to a reasonably high extent, on the degree of consensus and harmonious social relationships (Deflem, 2015).

In spite of the miscellany of crises, and the famed theoretical perception that crisis is an integral part of human society, the presence of law and order intrinsically may not guarantee and sustain security; rather, the limitation of those predispositions towards crime and criminality which are prevalent and transmitted didactically. The pervasiveness of crisis in the presence of existing law and order speaks volume. In Nigeria specifically, prior to the establishment of colonial rule, societies were not enmeshed in irredeemable crisis to the extent the social order appears irrelevant. To all intents and purpose, studies that conjecture the picture of the inadequacy of conventional policing system and further prescribe

community policing scheme are innovative. However, they failed to examine how those pristine cultural elements conveyed in the public will and sovereignty constitute limiting forces on crime and criminality in the society, therefore the foregoing review.

7. REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Trajectories of Community Policing in Nigeria

Historically, within the same year of the declaration of the Lagos Colony by the British colonial authorities (1861), the British colonial administration established the police for the purpose of enforcement of sanitary regulations in Lagos. This structure metamorphosed into the Nigeria Police Force with its headquarters in Lagos in 1930 (Igbo, 1999 in Gbenemene and Adishi, 2017).

The Nigeria Police is affected by various factors within and outside the structure, meaning that while some of its problems are structural, others are operational. The structural and extant factors include the unit of command, which is vested in the presidency, rendering it unitary in appearance in a federal system. Loyalty of the police and indeed the security architecture is to the president and the state rather than to the people and the nation whose institutions they are (Ikuteyijo, 2009). To this extent, a sitting governor in Nigeria openly declared that he was not in charge of the security of the state despite being the chief security officer of the state. In fact, as far back as 1963 General Elections, the central government under the Northern Peoples Congress (NPC) had used police brutality to enforce the presence of the central party in the west, following the arrest of Obafemi Awolowo and other stakeholders of the Action Group (AG) (Ugo, 2019). The police assumed a tool for political aggrandizement in the hands of the political class to be deployed against opponents. Added to the extant factors are the issues of poor remuneration, promotion, retraining, equipment/logistics (Ibeanu, 2007 in Gbenemene & Adishi, 2017).

Community Policing was launched on 27 April, 2004 by then Inspector General of Police, Tafa Balogun, during the President Olusegun Obasanjo era (Onuoha et al, 2021). Seven officers of the Nigeria Police proceeded on a study trip to the United Kingdom and the United States of America, to study and compare the various aspects of community policing. Fifty-three (53) officers were also trained in understanding the details and practice of Community Policing at Ikeja Police College (Okeke, 2013 cited in Onuoha et al, 2021).

Several writers have pointed out the various challenges that affect policing in Nigeria, including image challenge due to alleged corrupt practices. However, apart from the mere mention of the concept of community policing, literature has not shown clearly how the concept addresses the myriads of problems challenging the police, which elicits the introduction of the community policing policy. Literature has not shown the level of involvement, including the funding, the command and control unit, the needs for training and retraining, the needs for proper remuneration of personnel. To be iterative, it leaves for further examination how the involvement of the people in their own security may differ from the precolonial setting where such institutions were guided by the traditional structures built on social values, beliefs and tradition. Viewed from the philosophical angle, community policing involves more of preventive measures and retribution often through other traditional institutions like the festivals, *ebo* (including deities), *enyi*, *ugbo*, *abule*, *ane*, *egwu* (*Egungun* in Yoruba).

It remains undecided whether the laws and regulations for community policing are clearly distinct from the laws guiding the former policing method. Under the traditional system, the enforcers are subject to caution because where they are in breach of the traditional codes,

they too are susceptible to natural retribution. The lawless citizens and others under the traditional system are believed to be subjected to punishment by the elements that undergird the social control in precolonial settings. It goes to say that where traditional institutions are involved in the policing, the relationship between the law enforcement agencies and the law itself are guided by same laws, therefore breach of the law by such agents too is minimized as well as the tendency by law breakers to arm-twist the law. The custody of social control and balancing to a great extent determines the effectiveness of the law enforcers, because where the custody is with the people, the public opprobrium offenders are subjected to and the certainty of natural retribution keeps the rate of breaches and therefore insecurity under check.

Apart from increasing population, which rendered the number of policemen to 450 persons inadequate (ICRC, 2015), insufficient training, poor remuneration, ill equipment, lack of trust and cooperation contributed to the failure of conventional policing. The elevated security threats following the surge in organized crime and criminality further exposed the inadequacy of the police. This is without prejudice to the facts that the average Nigerian Policeman is intelligent and that they have won medals and awards at international missions. The inadequacy of funds informed the setting up of Police Trust Fund Act which was signed into law.

With a population estimate of more than 200million, the police strength of 371,800 as at 2019, equivalent to 530 persons to one policeman far outnumbers the UN prescription of 400-450. However, with the narrow gap between UN standards and the reality in Nigeria, it remains arguable whether the deficiency is in the number that is inadequate or that it is the objective of national security that is absent. A prognosis into what is responsible for the inadequacy of the Nigeria Police in handling security threats indicates there is a febrile institutional structure in relation to the existence of above-the law personalities, like the political class and the bourgeois. This is aggravated by poor remuneration and absence of motivation, therefore reliance on largesse. The institutional weakness is further entrenched in Section 215 of the Constitution of FRN 1999 provision for the appointment of the Inspector General of Police (IGP) by the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and compels compliance with presidential directives. Centralisation and concentration of powers in the president affects the loyalty of the police to subnational authorities and to the people from whom sovereignty derives.

The Community Policing alternative is founded on the ideal of community ownership and control of the policing system prevalent in the fifty states of United States of America, with respective names and enforcement measures (US Department of Justice). The concept, in the opinion of Mohammed Adamu, then IGP, connotes Federal Government recruitment of forty thousand policemen and posting them to their respective local governments of origin with community involvement. This system counters the idea of state recruiting and controlling policemen which puts the viability of the command and control structure to question. The Senate Reform Bill of 2019 fell through owing to the non-concurrence of the House of Representatives.

In concurrence with the stated problem of the shortcomings of the community policing scheme noted above, Audu, (2022) in his treatise 'It is Time to Go Public: Public Sociology and Community Policing in Nigeria' appears to be the leading literature. He expressed concerns that despite the commitment of reasonable funds by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID), to the community policing invention in Nigeria, operated hand in hand with the British Council's Security Justice and Growth in Nigeria, security falls below expectation. This enduring problem he attributed to the gap in

communication between the community and the police, which bridge he attempted to build through an exploration of the prospects of taking the sociology community policing to the Nigerian public. He was however, vague as to the powers of the public in terms of taking custody of sovereignty, in social, political and other terms without being subject to abuses by the superintendents of the rules.

Gbeneme & Adishi (2017) aptly noted that the loss of norms and values and beliefs that attached individuals to the society in the past is responsible for the pervasive compounding crimes and the loss of control. However, this view paid inadequate attention to the question of the custody of sovereignty, which in the past rested in the traditional institutions and aided abuses that have trailed conventional and community policing systems. The pristine systems respected no individuals nor groups in cases of violation of rules. There is a gap in the process of situating the custody of sovereignty within the matrix of social control.

Durkheim's Functionalism explains how the constituent units work in unison for the overall cohesion and sustenance of the centre. The Social Control Theory of Travis Hirschi more suitably explains how the detachment of society from the norms, values and beliefs that sustain cohesion and control accentuates crime and criminality.

Idakwo, & Ngharen, (2017) noted that *egwugwu*, *egwu*, *abule*, *enyi* and festivals, amongst others were elements of social control which represents the civilisation and socio-political customary settings. They fail to adequately present how these elements can be harvested for improvement in societal security and the degree of resilience of these elements.

Garba, K.A. & Maigida, S.A. (2020) have argued that the training of community groups such as vigilantes and volunteer guards in partnership with the police will lead to effective crime prevention and control. This view reinforces the position of this study that for effective community policing, the training and retraining of community groups is indispensable. However, this position does not adequately accommodate or provide for related shortcomings in the traditional policing system or the community policing system. One of such areas that elicits attention is the issue of sovereignty, funding and by extension, command and control. Another issue that deserves attention is compromise on the side of security agents and outright involvement in crime and brutality. The third and largely disturbing issue is abuse of power and the use of police as instrument for aggrandizement, to which the community policing system is similarly disposed without any deterring system for which the traditional precolonial setting is known. Therefore, custody or ownership of sovereignty or control remains a gap that must be bridged to ensure preventive and offensive policing. The guarantees are in the social control mechanisms to which the custodians of law and tradition in themselves are subject represented by those elements like the festivals and other rites.

Similarly, Ordu & Nnam, (2017) posited that the major problem that affect the police, which must be addressed as a precondition for effective community policing includes amongst others, the abuse of human rights, the loss of trust and lack of clear vision. Advancing the views of this research, the culture of rectitude, social justice and conscience reawakening according to Ordu and Nnam (2017) are indispensable to the attainment of an effective policing system. Nevertheless, the literature is vague over what constitutes social justice, the custody of social justice and the elements that form the columns upon which social justice thrive. Social justice cannot exist in a vacuum, therefore, position of this research is whether those elements that sustained social justice during the precolonial Nigerian societies can be explored, to bridge the gap between the urge or tendency to err and the restraint upon such action, which are not necessarily physical threat of punishment.

Theoretical Framework

Gbenemene & Adishi, (2017) put forward a Functionalist perspective to the concept of Community Policing, arguing that human behaviour is structured, and that relationship between members of the society are guided by rules that are patterned and recurrent (citing Harlambos and Holborn, 2005). They further argued that values and norms and beliefs unite any people based on existing order and stability which support any conflict-free society. Durkheim, who propounded the theory argues that all societal segments are interrelated and interdependent; each contributing to maintain a social order and every part influencing the other.

Given, that the police is an institutional part, whose ineffectiveness affects the other parts, it goes without saying that the system is dysfunctional and that the common societal will from which sovereignty derives is suppressed. It further goes that the state and society are at two extremes claiming ownership and sovereignty of state and therefore the control of security institutions. Among the inferences drawable from this contradiction is that state claim to sovereignty and its quest for self-production generates insecurity, and that security can only be guaranteed when the custody of sovereignty and control of the security structure is returned to the society. Apparently, not only democratic societies are affected by the placing of the custody of sovereignty, the failure of Communist societies speaks volume with regard to the exceptions in this theory.

This study adopts Social Control Theory, introduced by Travis Hirschi in his 1969 work, whither he opines that the presence or lack of effectiveness of social control on members of society determines their tendencies towards crime. Meaning that the obligatory feeling of individuals to in terms of bond and to abide or not with the rules of the society dictates whether he/she is disposed to committing crime or not. Hirschi further explains the individual-society relationship from four components: attachment, commitment, involvement and believe in the veracity of communal values (Costello, 2020). Though not without its own exceptions, because not all community members possess same heritage and believe all the societal values, such exceptions are too infinitesimal to affect the common societal belief and values transmitted through generations. The fact that crime attracts some economic benefits is strongly negated by the fear of the consequences of deviance in a society where sovereignty is ascribed to the people and retribution seems inescapable like among the Igala.

8. SOCIAL BALANCING INSTRUMENTS

The Egwu (Masquerades)

Among the Igala speaking people, maintenance of social order is a tradition passed down from one generation to others, comparable to the people's culture itself. The instruments for the maintenance of social order including rituals vary, depending on the community and the social system. *Egwu* for example, in one of the Ogbabede communities in Dekina Local Government Area, according to one of our informants (Abuh, 2023), is seen as a representative of the ancestral world, who in themselves serve as arbiters and purveyors of justice, unity, peace and progress. While it connotes masquerade in one sense, the masquerade represents the incarnation of the spirit of the ancestors. Seton, (1927) maintained that the Egwu attends the fortunes of families, with the powers to punish evil doers like criminality and adultery. Among the Igbo, the Age Grade System and the masquerade society had served as arbiters and enforcers of the rule of law (Okeke, 2013 in Onuoha *et al*, 2021).

What is of importance is the stabilizing role, the balancing and control measures related with oaths in unusual circumstances. Arbitration mostly resorted to the administration of these

instruments, for example the sasswood ordeal on grounds of suspicion on the death of underaged and disasters may be associated with witchcraftcy. The crux is the acknowledgement and acquiescence of the community to such social institutions and instruments of social balancing and control.

Festivals

Held in supplication for good fortune and celebration of life and thanksgiving for life, wealth and good health, and bumper, (Seton, 1927 in Awodi, *et al*, 2022) festivals remain a core value of Nigeria and indeed African societies that help maintain and preserve the peoples cultural values. Despite their commonness to African settings and the significant role festivals play as a means of maintaining social order, cultural festivals are typified and peculiar to certain communities. The integrating components in cultural festivals unconsciously bear restraint on criminality, and such are transmitted to the next generations through songs, dances, costumes and other rites that tend to suppress or mitigate divisive and criminal tendencies.

The Abule

Abule is a night masquerade, involved in charge of maintaining peace and security. It is a talking *egwu* (masquerade), characterized with casting aspersions at offenders, which also attracts public opprobrium for such offenders. It is an instrument for the maintenance of societal ethics and values of respect for public/communal will and constituted authority. Idakwo and Ngharen (2017) argued that the Igala tradition abhors criminality, and that part of the didactics towards transmission of the people's culture to the next generation is the Abule masquerade. Where *elifo* (taboo) is committed, the *abule* is involved in exertion of fines and exposition of offenders to public opprobrium with its presence and the menacing attraction. It thus serves preventive and punitive purposes in the administration of justice in the society without objection from any quarters. Sentinels in primitive societies scanned their environment for dangers; council of elders made decisions based on their interpretation of facts and their decisions were transmitted further down to other members of the society, Idakwo & Ngharen, (2017). Adamu, (2013) in Idakwo & Ngharen, 2017 rightly described the Igala Abule as a society (Emphasis required), he further described it as imbued with powers of omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence, acting without fear or favour by exposing wrong doers through proverbs and songs, with enormous powers over the community (Amade & Atule, 2003 in Idakwo and Ngharen, 2017).

Other Beliefs

Ugbo is symbolic of a spell against the entrance into the community by criminal elements from without, who come with the intent to steal from any member of the society. It is believed to keep the community from attack by way of poisoning too, as any poison whatsoever is neutralized upon passing through the entrance gate to the community where the *ugbo* is hanged. *Enyi*, is more of an oath administered to identify perpetrators of evil especially stealing in the community. This is however subject to the admittance of the suspects to undergo *enyi* oath or another trial by ordeal. *Ebo* refers to the god of oath or in another realm a clannish god that may be presented in any form, to which an oath may be sworn, it is purported to have the powers to hurt the offender irrespective of the status and relationship to the incidence that occasions oath taking. This may be *akpabana* (thunder god) believed to strike offenders dead with its celtswhich represents gods. Whether it is God or his representative does not matter as much as the justice it is believed to deliver when sworn to (Seton, 1927). Swearing falsely attracts punishment from the *akpabana*, which element is lacking in conventional administration of justice. *Ane* refers to the earth god, which

superintends the administration of justice in the community, whether all members of the community acquiesce to its authority or not.

Folktales are intended to transmit moral lessons into the younger generations, sometimes imaginary, philosophized in norms, beliefs, cultures and traditions as didactic norms focused on community preservation. Common to traditional Nigerian settings, building of positive character, responsible living, preservation of culture and tradition, promotion of peace.

9. DISCUSSING FINDINGS

In all, the elements of traditional social control and their efficacy are not scientific and provable; however, it is not in doubt whether social control mechanisms existed in Nigeria and African societies before the era of colonial rule that usurped the sovereignty of these societies. It is also not in doubt, whether there was any form of compliance with the traditional mechanisms for crime control and prevention among traditional societies, however, to the question that at what point can the nonscientific elements be administered to complement community policing efforts? The answer is not far-fetched, the mere resilience of the institutions that represent the old order, and the components that survived the alien cultural and religious onslaught which have existed side by side with the conventional system points to the prospects of an effective composite system.

The crux is that sovereignty must not wholly reside in the state represented by the government and its agency (police), rather sovereignty must be relinquished or shared with the people through the traditional institutions that superintend these communities, who in turn activate the traditional social control components of society.

10. CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, it is evident that there were elements of traditional community policing or social control system prior to the arrival of the Arabic and Western civilization and colonization that altered them. The elements of social control including the norms, values and beliefs were distorted at the point of the colonization and administration of the people. The rate of crime and criminality has been on the surge following the loss of pristine societal values; this necessitated the substitution of the conventional with community policing system. There are high prospects for a more effective crime prevention and control measures based on a composite system that includes preexisting traditional systems.

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