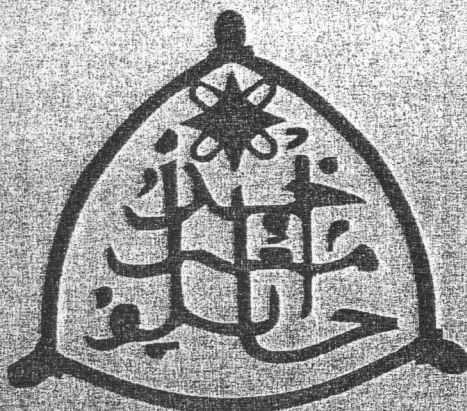




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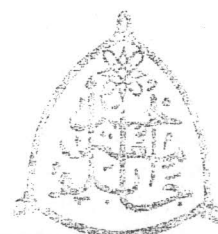
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RESTORATIVE INTERVENTION AND COMMUNITY POLICING: A DUO REQUIREMENT FOR AN EFFECTIVE CRIME CONTROL IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

The goals of crime prevention and control have been deemed imperative especially as the rate of crime keeps swelling. The face of policing is adversely changing so also is the problem of recidivism hampering the realization of policing goals. Undoubtedly, the goals can never be attained without the involvement of community members. Contrarily, the relationship between the police and the community looks very gloomy. Thus, these necessitated the argument for the intervention of restorative philosophy in the field of community policing as an essential requirements for winning the war against crimes in Ilorin. This study, therefore, examined how restorative justice and community policing could help in the effective control and prevention of crime in Ilorin and Nigeria at large. The study was a survey, using triangulation method and was guided by social control theory. For quantitative data, census study was conducted on Sixty (60) respondents found in the Ministry of Justice. The census study was conducted because of the relatively small size of the respondents that were found in the Ministry. Also, seven (7) respondents (four for in-depth interview and three for Key Informant Interview) were purposively selected from Ministry of Justice, and Police headquarters, Idia-ape, Oke-adini communities respectively. SPSS analysis revealed that majority of minor crimes and few serious crimes could better be settled by community elders, which is out of court settlement. In addition, the interviews suggested that, for community relation to be at its prime, police officers serving as mediators in the community should always aim at pleasant outcome because they may also be victims of their discretion. Hence, the research recommends the inclusion of restorative justice principles in the country's penal system and improvements in the principles of community policing.

Keywords: Restorative justice; Intervention; Policing Goal; Crime Control and Prevention; Community Policing

Introduction

The major goals of policing have always been the prevention and control of crimes, enforcement of laws and the maintenance of law. The police are perceived as accountable to the individual citizens, the

law, and the courts (Nicholl, 1999). They act as agents of crime control and maintain peace among people. They are viewed as the most visible representative of authority and are a function of government (Ogwezzy,

Adebayo, & Kekere, 2016). However, police goals and lines of accountability can directly conflict with one another. The public view the police as threats and withdraws their support. Minor cases that should have been settled right with the police are filed at various courts for trials, consequently reducing the focus on finding causes of crimes, needs of offenders and victims as well as reintegration of offenders especially when the focus of criminal justice is more on punishment than crime prevention (Nicholl, 1999; Ogwezzy et al, 2016).

Community policing contains the idea of proactive and decentralized method designed to reduce crime and the fear of crime by involving the 'neighbourhood' police officer in 'his' community. The philosophy attempts to address the goals of crime control and prevention through a working partnership with community institutions (Parks, 2000). In complex societies, policing may be necessary to ensure the basic human needs of security. Both public and personal security requires peace and order and is an element of restorative justice (Morris, 1992). This restorative justice emphasizes the importance of elevating the role of victims and community members, holding offenders directly accountable to the people they offend, restoring the losses of the victims, and providing a range of opportunities for negotiation and problem solving (Parks, 2000).

Crime requires the application of justified coercions to control of which punishment or treatment from the traditional criminal system becomes necessary. This includes subjection of an offender to expiation and penitence. Nonetheless, it is imperative and constantly ideal to try as much as possible to resolve victim-offender differences, correct

antisocial conducts, and heal the 'wound' done to the 'collective sentiment' using alternatives to institutional confinement. So if there is any programme that can be adopted in addressing the challenges of prison congestion in Nigeria, it is restorative justice (Nnam, 2016). Similarly, if there is any programme that can be employed in reducing the rate of crime and recidivism, it is the combination of restorative justice as well as community policing. The duo is required for the achievement of the goals of criminal justice.

It is important to note that restorative justice and community policing exist at different levels of abstraction and, perhaps more basically, emerged in opposite directions. Restorative justice is a paradigm that is given significance through practitioners seeking alternatives to punitive justice practices. The model continues to advance and be tested against ideals. Unlike the model of community policing that emerged from a set of practices that eventually became characterized and rationalized by an ideology (Martin, 2006). The model was intended to reunite the police with the community and to enable the police accomplish the mission of crime prevention and control. However, both principles share a common characteristic of local action, local solutions, community standards and local control, and most importantly they seek to solve the problems by preventing, reforming, and dealing with each person and each problem as unique (Parks, 2000).

Statement of Problem

The idea of community policing stemmed from the assumption that crimes can be prevented or controlled if the police work together with members of the

community under their jurisdiction. The belief in social cohesion is central to the success of police-community partnership. However, the failure of community policing has been a factor of poor police-community partnership being a result of police brutality, corruption, mistrust and hatred against the police, etc. The excessive use of violence and force by police officers, the abuse of their powers and discretion, arbitrary arrest (of even innocent citizens), their boundless involvement in bribery, prejudice and maltreatment of suspects have also contributed to the failures of community policing. The poor administration of justice in courts, the exclusion of victims and offenders as active participants in the hearing of their cases, the unnecessary delay of court process, the deceptive acts by legal practitioners and likewise the erratic behaviours of presiding judges or magistrates are also explanations for the failure of the criminal justice system to achieve the goals of crime control and prevention in Nigeria.

The spoils and misuse of the retributive system have incited vengeance in the minds of offenders and have also made first-time offenders concluded on lifestyles of crime. The reason cannot be far-fetched being that imprisonment is the major means of sanction imposed on both simple and felony offences. The poor prison classification system has encouraged the free mix of hardened and first-time offenders. Some inmates in Nigeria prisons have also been reported in literatures as accused persons awaiting trial; a result of the poor adjudicatory system in the country. The poor application of the retributive sanctions has placed victims in the zones of dangerous reprisal declared by their offenders. Subsequently, there is an urgent need to

employ a more humanitarian policing system alongside community policing if retribution does not work so that the police and the criminal justice system can accomplish the central mission of crime control and prevention.

Scholars have argued and advocated for the implementation of restorative justice. According to Braithwaite (1998; 2002), restorative justice is touted and has been commended for its impacts and contributions at working towards the responsibility of offenders and efforts geared towards restoring victims and the community to their former positions before the occurrence of the crime. However, the principle has not been enough to achieve the desired crime reduction coupled with the incessant failures of community policing in Nigeria. The suggestions put forward by earlier literatures towards reducing the failures of community policing as well as achieving the goals of crime reduction have not been operational. It is against this inadequacy that this study examines the significance of restorative intervention and community policing as the duo requirement for an effective crime control and prevention in the country.

Objectives

To examine the application of the models of restorative justice and community policing towards the accomplishment of an effective crime control and prevention in Ilorin, Nigeria

To determine the significance of restorative intervention in the world of policing and in reducing the failures of the retributive penal policy system in Nigeria.

Empirical Literature

Community policing is a model that is based on the notion that if the police and the community work together in creative

ways, they can solve many community problems related to crime, fear of crime, social and physical disorder (Parks, 2000). Community policing was perceived to be radical in their implications for a sincere co-production of safe communities (Kelling & Moore, 1988), and in most statement that are ambitious and could result to a change of power in the hands of some groups (Skolnick & Bayley, 1986). Today, there have been various arguments as to the extent at which the proposed power-sharing ever really happened (Buerger, 1994); whether the community was ready to partake in the social control processes without a systematic and substantial community building (Rosenbaum, 1994), or whether the vision of the community building was merely just vision and nothing else (Taylor, Fritsch, & Caeti, 1998).

The emergence of restorative policing has come to give a new phase to police organization (McCold & Wachtel, 1998; Nicholl, 1999). Restorative justice, a victim-offender-community-centered justice intervention (Nnam, 2016), offers a fundamentally different framework for understanding and responding to crime and victimization. The model stresses the importance of elevating the role of crime victims and community members while holding offenders directly responsible to restore their victims' losses as well as providing opportunities for mediation, negotiation and problem solving (Parks, 2000). The model ultimately discards the retributive practice and embrace peacemaking whilst seeking to make crime victims whole again and assisting offenders in restoring their lost empathy (Quinney, 2000; Sullivan & Tifft, 2001).

Restorative justice could be said to be closely similar to the set visions of community policing (Van Ness & Strong,

1997; Bazemore & Walgrave, 1999). The assumption is that there is need for transforming the relationship between the criminal justice system and community wherein, the community assumes an active role in ensuring public safety and justice dispensation. The new relationship makes justice to be perceived as taking vital roles in preserving order while the community is seen as ensuring peace (Van Ness & Strong, 1997). Thus, restorative justice has come to lay its foundation on some shared values and strategies with those concerned with community justice (Clear & Karp, 1999) and community policing (Bazemore, 2001; Pranis, 2001), on the basis of general and specific issues respectively.

For the community to attain this position the police and the criminal justice system must be devoted to the vision of a strong police-community relationship and community building should also be the most important focus of restorative justice (Hunter, 1985; Cullen, 1994; Putnam, 2000; Bazemore, 2001). In addition, community building should be geared towards promoting citizen and community groups' skills and beliefs. It should aim to promote the adoption of informal social control, (Hunter, 1985) including social support (Cullen, 1994; Bazemore, 2001) established in social capital since relationship (trusts and mutuality) among community members are based on shared social norms (Putnam, 2000).

Looking at the restorative justice conferencing techniques, crime stakeholders and the police unanimously makes an agreement which outlines the obligations that are to be carried out by the offender such as restitution, community service, or other forms of informal sanction (e.g. apologies, shaming, peace-making treaties,

etc) repairing the harms done without the need of going through the adversarial process. Such agreements enhance the community's sense of ownership of the case and their resolutions, give maximum satisfaction for the victim and offender, and build or rebuild community skills (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001). It is important to note that restorative justice and community policing exist at different levels of abstraction and, perhaps more fundamentally emerged in opposite directions. However, both principle shares a common characteristic of local action, local solutions, community standards and local control, and most importantly they seek to solve the problems by preventing, reforming, and dealing with each person and each problem as unique (Parks, 2000).

Restorative justice encompasses nearly all aspects regarding alternatives to incarceration. The adoptions of community policing and out-of-court settlement are evolving forms of restorative justice. Community policing without mediation is baseless as mediation is regarded as a crucial aspect of community policing, even though mediation taking place unofficially out of the regular criminal justice is part of the initiatives of restorative justice. In this system, issues relating to an offender or accused are preferably treated in the community, consequently reducing the number of prisoners. The community makes convincing and defensible alternative provisions to restore the biased justice and breached security affected by crime and criminals (Nnam, 2016). Cooper (1997) also argues that the police ability to serve as mediators in dispute resolution rather than making a formal arrest has longed been evident and which could be regarded as a core aspect of community policing, hence, gearing towards the standard of restorative

justice (Siegel, 2008).

So many criticism have been raised regarding the involvement of police in assuming the role of a prosecutor, judge and law enforcer. These functions are considered exceeding the boundary limits or what could be called 'boundary erosion' in that respect (Friel, 2000). Advocates of restorative justice also probe the role of police in decision making. They are of the perception that conflicts should rather be resolved by the juvenile justice professional; If they are not been resolved by the criminal professional, because they are more like social work oriented experts (White, 1992; Umbreit & Stacey, 1996). It is a question of whether the police could be effective in the restorative or mediation process among crime stakeholders. The police use conferences as a medium of gathering evidences then assume back the role of law enforcement (Young, 2001).

Some other believes that police could be helpful in mediation for they could help participants reach satisfactory decisions that coincide with the community views compared to those of social work orientation (McCold & Wachtel, 1998). For restorative justice to achieve its goal in the affected community, it is therefore contingent on the involvement of police in assuming the role of decision makers in mediation process (Christie, 1977). There have been practical ways the police have been involved in restorative decision making and among other restorative programs like; assuming the primary role of suggesting an independent restorative conferencing programs; assuming the role of sponsors for restorative programmes within the agency; participating in restorative programmes organized internally (in-house) which is geared towards victim needs, reparation of youths, among other essential

etc) repairing the harms done without the need of going through the adversarial process. Such agreements enhance the community's sense of ownership of the case and their resolutions, give maximum satisfaction for the victim and offender, and build or rebuild community skills (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001). It is important to note that restorative justice and community policing exist at different levels of abstraction and, perhaps more fundamentally emerged in opposite directions. However, both principle shares a common characteristic of local action, local solutions, community standards and local control, and most importantly they seek to solve the problems by preventing, reforming, and dealing with each person and each problem as unique (Parks, 2000).

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needs (Schwartz, Hennessey, & Lavitas, 2003).

The informal role of the police is probably the least noticed and indeed the most essential role of police officers in restorative justice practices. The applicability of restorative justice principles by officers in response to crime will consequently be expanded and known to the community if applied on the street, various homes, schools and workplaces compared to the overreliance of such expansion on a single restorative program. More so, such street where restorative justice is been adopted tends to use the former mechanism (court and other adversarial system) as the last resort as the informal ways are perceived effective and less expensive. Also, it enhances the good use of restorative programmes when an officer deems it fit to apply restorative principles in resolving conflicts thereby making it less formally (Hines & Bazemore, 2003).

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by social control theory propounded by Travis Hirschi. Social control theory is a related criminological theory which argues that the power of the state cannot dominate the community cohesion and support to controlling wrongdoings in the criminal justice system (Williams, 2005). The theory helped explain the need to charge family and the community with the commission of controlling and preventing crimes in the society because they are perceived as the most effective agents of social cum crime control compared to the criminal justice professionals. According to Williams (2005), the ideology behind community control is perceived as the 'built of individuals and families' with whom powers

are vested on to ensure positive changes and if they are of the right intervention strategies, they can "re-moralize" the community.

Social control theory positioned 3 important agents of crime control and sectionalized them as *primary*, *secondary* and *tertiary*. The proponents of this theory contended that the family is the primary agent of control, followed by the community including schools, churches, mosques, mass media, etc. The tertiary agents involve the criminal justice system and the government. On the whole, these agencies are saddled with the responsibility of securing adherence to norms and values whose violation would invite negative sanctions on the individual or group. The theory encouraged the participation of every community member towards controlling and preventing crimes, including victim(s) and their offender(s). It is on this major premise that the principle of restorative justice and community policing is established and must be maintained.

Basically, the theory advocated that the power of crime control and prevention should be vested in the hands of the affected family and community while the intervention of the criminal justice system and the government would be necessary when the case is outside the powers of the family and/or community or the case is between two or more communities. In the argument of Karp & Breslim (2001), the central focus of crime reaction should be on the harms caused by the crimes and where the harms could have emerged from. Offenders are commended to amend and restore their wrongdoings and the harm caused, and if necessary, makes restitution or reparation to the victim(s). To accomplish these tasks, the community needs to be

encouraged to support the offender probably through mentorship and counseling. They should also assist the victims deal with and/or recover quickly from the harms caused by the crime compared to the "state's definitional framework and orbit of responsibility".

Research Strategies

The research is a descriptive research that employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to generate data. Three segments of the society were targeted, Ministry of Justice Ilorin, the Police and the Community Elders in Ilorin metropolis. In the Ministry of Justice, sixty (60) lawyers were found in two departments, Alternative Dispute Resolution (out of court settlement department) and Court settlement department, forty five (45) and fifteen (15) respectively as at the time of data collection. Because of the small population of the respondents, the researcher resulted to covering the whole population, making it a census type. Therefore, sixty questionnaires were self administered on the respondents because of their literate nature. Seven (7) respondents were purposively selected for both IDI and KII. Two (2) each were selected from the two (2) departments for IDI and one (1) respondent each from the Kwara Police Headquarters, Magaji in Idia-ape and Baale in Oke-adini, Basin for KII. While quantitative

data generated were analyzed via SPSS to generate frequencies and percentages, qualitative information were analyzed through content analysis.

Two major instruments were used: questionnaire and interview schedule/checklist. Questionnaire was the primary instrument that was used in eliciting information from the legal practitioners/lawyers in the Ministry of Justice. It was self-administered on the respondents to allow for conveniences. The questionnaire consisted of both open and close ended questions, at the same time; it was sectioned to cover the identified objectives. Interview checklists were also designed along the objectives. Also, hand-written and audio tape recorder were used in recoding information with the help of one research assistant.

Findings and Discussion

Sixty (60) copies of questionnaires were printed and distributed to the respondents and fifty (50) copies were retrieved. Since the 50 questionnaires were properly filled, the response rate was considered adequate enough to provide reliable analysis of the questionnaires especially when the information will be complemented with narrations from both IDI and KII.

*Socio-demographic Characteristics of the Respondents***Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Socio-demographic Characteristics**

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	34	68
	Female	16	32
	Total	50	100
Religion	Christianity	21	42
	Islam	29	58
	Total	50	100
Academic Qualifications	First Degree	42	84
	SSCE	8	16
	Total	50	100
Age	18-24yrs	15	30
	25-34yrs	21	42
	35yrs and above	14	28
	Total	50	100
Marital Status	Single	29	58
	Married	21	42
	Total	50	100

Researcher's Survey (2019)

Findings from table 1 reveal that approximately 68% of the respondents are males while 32% represented the female population implying that the male respondents constitute majority of the learned and experienced individuals in the community. This revelation might not be unconnected with the patriarchal orientations of most cultures in the country that place men above women when it comes to educational consideration. Based on religion, the table reveals that majority of the respondents (58%) are Muslims while those of the Christian belief are 42%. The reason is not far-fetched in that the State in which the study was conducted is dominated by the Muslims. The data on academic qualifications also indicated that majority (84%) of the respondents are holders of First-Degree certificates while only a minority of them (16%) are holders of SSCE certificate. This is to certify that the majority of respondents have the required knowledge and

experiences necessary for the provision of confident answers to questions contained in the questionnaires.

On age-range, 15% of the respondents fall between ages 18–24. Majority of the respondents are between ages 25–34 years while the remaining percentage is occupied by respondents within the age-range of 35 years and above. This revelation is almost in consonance with the data revealed on the educational qualifications and marital status of respondents. The findings also revealed that majority (58%) of the respondents are married and 42% of them are still single. This is a revelation that is likely going to match the ages of the respondents with their marital status as well as their academic qualifications and experience. For instance, the table may reveal that most respondents that fall within the age distribution of 35 years (and above) are married and have already acquired their First degree certificates.

*Collective Forces and Crime Control and Prevention***Table 2: Mutual Relationship between the Police, Vigilante and Community as a Whole will Enhance the Effectiveness of Crime Control and Prevention**

Mutual Relationship	Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Agree	15	30.0	30.0	30.0
Strongly Agree	35	70.0	70.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Researcher's Survey (2019)

Table 2 reveals an effective crime control and prevention through a strong mutual relationship between the police, community vigilante and the community. From the results, while 30% agreed to this collective effort of forming a joint force to prevent and control crime, 70% strongly agreed and believed in the alliance. It is believed that the members of a particular community know the nook and cranny of the society they live in more than anyone else. In this regard, to earn the trust and cooperation of the people together with the community vigilante, the police should take it as a responsibility to include them in their struggles against crime prevention and control. Community members would also not hesitate or be scared to approach the police anytime and anywhere to update them on events in the society and give them first-hand information about societal crimes within the jurisdictions of the police. This mutual relationship and alliance would also discourage the 'we-and-they attitude' upheld by the police under the disguise of their uniforms.

From table 2, there is the need for strengthening the relationship between criminal justice system and community where the community assumes an active role in ensuring public safety activities and justice dispensation. To attain this position, the

police must demonstrate their loyalty to this vision and the principles of restorative justice would take community building as the main focus with significant attention. The community building will be geared towards gathering and promoting citizen and community groups' skills and beliefs in the informal intervention to crime, harm, and conflict (Cullen, 1994; Bazemore, 2001).

A police officer, during a key informant interview session, disclosed that the input of the community as well as the cooperation of community members in their jurisdiction is pivotal in the discharge of their statutory duties as it would assist them in the formulation, adoption and evaluation of effective strategies necessary for crime control and prevention. He explained thus:

"Preventing and controlling crimes in the society have always been one of our central challenges especially in this jurisdiction of ours. Individuals in the community know more about their areas more than we do. So if the community could help us in our functions, I believe it will go a long way in preventing crimes in the community". (KII/Police/2019)

One of the community heads interviewed also stressed the need for the joint partnership of the police and community members in curbing the excesses of crimes in the society. He stated thus:

"The main reason why we have not been able to control crimes is because of the poor relationship between our community and the police. The police have not been able to obtain the trust and obedience of the people they serve. So, it is only when this trust is maintained that people will want to work with the police to prevent crimes in the community. Let the police give room for their trust in people's heart and let them join forces with the vigilantes and other anti-crime groups in the community, then there will be less crime in the society and peace will reign in this community" (KII/Baale/2019)

Restorative Intervention and Community Policing

Table 3 presents the responses of

respondents on the intervention of restorative justice policies in community policing and their significance in the prevention and control of crime. The results show that majority (96%) of the respondents agreed that the application of restorative and community policing by police officers could assist them to effectively prevent and control crime. While only 4% agreed to the contrary. This finding is plausible with argument of Nnam (2016) that the goals of community policing are better achieved with mediation because mediation is regarded as a core aspect of community policing. Even though mediation taking place unofficially outer the conventional criminal justice is still part of the initiatives of the principles of restorative justice.

Table 3: The Intervention of Restorative Justice in the World of Community Policing can Effectively assist the Police in the Achievement of the Goal of Crime Control and Prevention

Restorative Intervention, Community Policing and Effective Crime Control and Prevention				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
Yes	48	96.0	96.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Researcher's Survey (2019)

Without reservation, Cooper (1997) submitted that the ability of the police to serve as mediators in conflict resolution rather than making a formal arrest could be regarded as a core aspect of community policing, hence, gearing towards the standard of restorative justice (Siegel, 2008). The community also enhances the good application of restorative programmes especially when a police officer deems it fit to apply restorative principles in resolving conflicts thereby making it less formally.

The application of restorative programs in community policing would help effectively to curtail the menace of crimes in the society. Majority of opinions documented during the

interview sessions advocated for the application of the principles of restorative justice and community policing by police officers in their mission of crime control and prevention. Solving crimes, particularly the minor crimes, would help reduce the increasing rate of crimes and the number of recidivists in the country. As far as crime control and prevention is concerned, the impacts of effectiveness would be a reduction in the number of professional hardened criminals, a swift identification of potential criminals, a decline of vengeance in the minds of offenders, a successful rehabilitation of first-time and habitual offender and an absolute deterrence and

conformity to legal rules. A lawyer explained the significance as follows:

"The application of restorative justice and community policing can be applied to both minor and serious cases. We are hackneyed of prosecuting minor cases that can simply be resolved between the conflicting parties. The police must reinforce their relationship with the members of the community and resolve disputes that transpire among them according to the dictates of justice. Serious cases can also be solved by the police through the application of restorative justice programmes such as victim-offender mediation, family conferencing, circles, panels, etc. However, cases that are beyond the ability of the police can be transferred to the court for proper adjudication. Apart from controlling and preventing crimes, the application of both models

would also help solve the many challenges facing the criminal justice system in the country particularly the challenges of prison congestion and recidivism." (IDI/Lawyer/2019)

Police-Community Cooperation and Resolution of Cases

Table 4 presents the responses of respondents on police-community cooperation in the resolution of cases. The results show that majority (54%) of the respondents agreed that police-community cooperation can help police officers in the wise use of their discretions to determine cases to be resolved in the society as well as those to be referred to court. 26% of the respondents also strongly agreed to this opinion. On the contrary, while 16% of the respondents disagreed to this opinion, 4% of them strongly disagreed.

Table 4: Police and Community Cooperation can be Effective in the Use of Discretion to Decide Cases to be Resolved in the Community and Cases to be Referred to Court.

Police Community Cooperation				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
Disagree	8	16.0	16.0	20.0
Agree	27	54.0	54.0	74.0
Strongly Agree	13	26.0	26.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Researcher's Survey (2019)

Going with the majority, the community best solves crimes in their respective locality. Majorly, minor crimes and few of the serious crimes could be resolved by community elders, e.g. Mogaji, Baale, Kings, among other mediators. This mediation could however be done in the presence of government officials particularly the police. In the argument of Bazemore & Umbreit (2001), the stakeholders affected by crime and the police as facilitators unanimously make an agreement which outlines the

obligations to be carried out by the offenders such as restitution, community service, or any other form of informal sanctions, e.g. apologies, shaming, peace-making treaties and approaches for rebuilding shattered relationship which consequently repair harms and damages caused to victims without the need of going through the adversarial process.

Considering the qualitative data generated, it was revealed that police serving as mediators in the community

should make sure the outcome of such mediation satisfies the community members because they are also in one way or the other victims. So, if such outcome is displeasing to the community, the police should seek the opinion of the community and settles or resolves conflict in accordance with the terms of justice. Only then would police-community relationship be at its prime. Accordingly, in the course of an in-depth interview, a Lawyer remarked:

Police and Neighbourhood Watch-Meeting

Table 5: Police in each jurisdiction should be invited whenever a neighbourhood watch-meeting is organized

Neighbourhood Watch Meeting			Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Frequency	Percent		
No	7	14.0	14.0	14.0
Yes	43	86.0	86.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Researcher's Survey (2019)

The tabular presentation in table 5 shows that 86% of the respondents consented to the statement that the police should be invited to take part in a neighbourhood watch-meeting or security meeting whenever it is being organized, while 14% of the respondents do not reckon with this idea. The implication of the above, going by the majority, is that the members of a community know more about where they live in more than anyone else. There is a saying that the police are the public and public are the police; this is the spirit of community policing. This medium of neighbourhood watch-meeting would serve as an avenue where the community and the police would come together and share ideas about re-occurring crimes and how to solve it, as well as how to control and prevent crimes in hot spot and crime prone areas.

"Restorative justice would stop the idea of police charging trivial issues to court when they have been enlightened about how it works. A policeman with accurate understanding of restorative justice could serve as a mediator in the community to get such cases solved. The police then must make sure the outcome satisfies the community. I think by so doing, there will be an enhanced police-community cooperation and relationship." (IDI/Lawyer/2019)

It has been revealed that the presence of police in the neighbourhood watch-meeting organized by the community vigilantes has made the police to be effective in policing their jurisdiction. A Chief in a neighbourhood community stated during the course of an interview as follows:

We sometimes invite the police over whenever we organize security meetings. Putting heads together has really paved way for us in ensuring peace and security in our areas (KII/Mogaji/2019).

On the contrary, 14% of the respondents do not agree to the idea probably because they are of the perception that the community members will not be free to express their thoughts. Some are of the opinion that such meeting should be free from external intervention. This confirms one of the critics of community policing that this model could result to a change of power in the hands of some groups in the neighbourhood and

citizens (Skolnick & Bayley, 1986).

Table 6: Police presence in neighbourhood watch-meeting will help them devise strategies to combating crime in their respective jurisdiction.

Police Strategy	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Disagree	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
Disagree	2	4.0	4.0	16.0
Agree	19	38.0	38.0	54.0
Strongly Agree	23	46.0	46.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Researcher's Survey (2019)

Considering the information in table 6, 46% to 38% of respondents that constituted the majority strongly agree and agreed respectively that the police should be invited to neighbourhood watch meeting. They are of the opinion that the invitation would help the police come up with helpful strategies to be implemented. This is made possible when the police are present in such meeting to know the crimes on the increase and how to fight them. The police also would be able to locate crime hotspot and prone areas as well as various strategies to adopt to combat such threats.

During the course of an interview, the police officer confirmed the above submission:

...I wouldn't mention the Area. We have been head over heels over this Area because a day will not go by without crimes been committed. We have deployed several strategies to combat these re-occurring crimes but all was to no avail. It was until we met with the community vigilante and some members of the community that we were able re-strategize our plans and fortunately, we were able to nab the disturbing perpetrators. (KII/Police/2019)

Discussion of findings

For an effective crime control and prevention, there is a need for a strong relationship between the police,

community vigilante and the community. Most of the respondents (70%) strongly believed in the collective effort of forming a joint force to prevent and control crime. Plausibly, Van Ness & Strong (1997) and Bazemore & Walgrave (1999) explained the need for transforming and strengthening the relationship between criminal justice system (government) and community wherein, the community should assume an active role in ensuring public safety activities and justice dispensation. The proposed relationship would make justice to be viewed as taking pivotal roles in preserving order and the community is believed to guarantee and maintain peace within its territory (Van Ness & Strong, 1997). In addition, it will also aim to promote the adoption of informal social control, (Hunter, 1985) including social support (Cullen, 1994; Bazemore, 2001) established in social capital as members' relationships (trust and mutuality) are based on shared norms and values (Putnam, 2000).

As further revealed by the findings, the application of both restorative and community policing by police officers would assist effectively in preventing and controlling crime. This strongly supports the argument of Nnam (2016) that community policing without mediation is unjustifiable as mediation is regarded as an important

aspect of community policing. Mediation is one of the core initiatives of restorative policing. Advocates of restorative justice have probed the role of police in decision making. They are of the perception that if conflicts are not been resolved by criminal justice professionals, it should rather be resolved by the juvenile justice professional since they are more like social work oriented experts (White, 1992; Umbreit & Stacey, 1996). The informal role of the police is probably the least noticed and indeed the most essential role of police in restorative justice practices. The applicability of restorative justice principles by officers in response to crime will consequently be expanded and known to the community if applied on the street, various homes, schools and workplaces compared to the over reliance of such expansion on a single restorative program (Hines & Bazemore, 2003).

Researchers like McCold & Wachtel, (1998) believe that the police could be helpful in mediation for they could help participants reach a unanimous and satisfactory decision that coincide with the community views compared to those of social work orientation. On the contrary, there have been various critics regarding the involvement of the police in assuming the role of a prosecutor, judge and law enforcer. These roles are considered exceeding the boundary limits of the police or what could be called boundary erosion (Friel, 2000).

Apparently, this finding support the submission of Christie, (1977) that for restorative justice to achieve the goal of conflict resolution in communities, it is contingent on the involvement of police in assuming the role of decision makers. Accordingly, Schwartz, Hennessey, & Lavitas (2003) argued that there have been practical

ways the police have been involved in the restorative decision making and among other restorative programs like; assuming the primary role of recommending an independent restorative conferencing programs; assuming the role of sponsors for restorative programmes within the agency; participating in restorative programmes organized internally (in-house) which is geared towards victim needs, reparation of youths, etc. As a result, Hines & Bazemore (2003) declared that communities where restorative justice is been adopted are perceived effective and less expensive in crime control. The community best solves crimes in their respective locality through mediation. Minor crimes and few of the serious crimes could be resolved by community elders, e.g. Mogaji, Baale and the Kings, among other mediators.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The failures of community policing is a function of the strained relationship between the police and citizens of the country. This poor relationship has always been an obstacle to the attainment of the goal of an effective crime control and prevention in the country. The police are expected to improve their relationship with the community they serve if policing goals must be achieved. Because of the severe rift in police-community relationship, it is not enough to implement a transformed community policing system to solve the many challenges of the police and criminal justice system. Rather, we need the intercession of the principles of restorative justice. Majority of the respondents, including the criminal justice professionals agreed that the duo is necessary for an effective crime control and prevention. This is because they will help in solving the problem of a poor police-community relation, administrative delay in justice, prison

congestion, recidivism, and reduce the bulks of minor cases transferred to courts, etc.

Restorative justice will help mould a flesh of remorsefulness and regret rather than vengeance and hatred in the minds of offenders. Community policing would help improve the relationship between the police, the community, the offenders, as well as the victims. The number of trivial and serious cases charged to court will be reduced as well as the number of awaiting-trial inmate; justice would be administered to the satisfaction of all crime stakeholders involved; offenders' rehabilitation will be guaranteed of a success; the police and criminal justice system would be well respected and trusted; etc. Hence, the research suggests that police officers serving as mediators in communities must make sure the outcome of their mediation please the community and all stakeholders involved and must conform to the dictations of justice. They should seek the input of individual members in ensuring an effective policing. The police should also be invited over whenever a neighbourhood watch meeting is been organized by community vigilante. Thus, the two models must be employed in the routine policing activities of the police.

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