



# **Multinational Corporations As Partners In Curbing Insecurity In Rivers State: The Community Policing Approach**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Insecurity has become a major global issue in the last few decades and Nigeria has had a fair share of this menace. There has been growing concerns over the spate of violence, kidnapping, cultism, militancy, killings and other associated crimes in Rivers State and other states in the nation. Some communities have been deserted and companies operating there have left or relocated leaving a huge economic impact on the states and nation at large. In a bid to deal with this issue, successive governments have adopted the traditional policing model in crime fighting but this seems not to have yielded the desired results. The spate of crimes in most communities in Rivers State seems not to have reduced in spite of the efforts of the police and other security forces. There is a need therefore for a change of approach to a more inclusive and integrated efforts from communities, multinationals operating in the communities and the police in curbing crimes and ensuring safer neighbourhoods in the state. This is what the community police model advocates. This study therefore examined the community policing approach and how it takes cognizance of the efforts of both community members and multinational corporations specifically.

**Keywords:** Insecurity, Multinational Corporation, Host communities, Community Policing

## **INTRODUCTION**

Security is everybody's business in a community. Any effort in tackling insecurity must include all the stakeholders in the affected neighbourhood for it to be meaningful and effective. This was the view of Clever (2014) when he suggested that the police and the community must share jointly in the responsibility for promoting public safety, and each has an important role to play. Unfortunately, Rivers State, like most states in the oil rich Niger Delta region of Nigeria has been plagued with conflict for the past four decades- owing to the negative impact of oil exploration (Adebanjoko, 2017). Following the discovery of crude oil in commercial quantity in Oloibiri (present day Bayelsa State) in 1956 and in other states of the Niger Delta, Rivers inclusive and the subsequent exploration of crude oil by multinational corporations in most communities in this area, there has been massive pollution of the environment- air, land and sea including the people's sources of livelihood. This led to a demand for compensation by the affected communities. This demand has taken various forms including confrontations with the multinational corporations, security agencies and the Federal Government. Such confrontations were informed by the perceived neglect and marginalization of host companies by the Federal Government who controls all of the huge earnings from crude oil exploration and the multinational corporations. This led to the emergence of various militant groups. These groups kidnapped workers from multinational corporations operating in communities, vandalized pipelines of these corporations and destroyed properties worth millions and billions of naira. In turn, the Federal Government in a bid to deal with the issue sent in security forces who adopt violent approaches in dealing with this people and this has created unrest in oil bearing communities in Rivers State.

In a bid to deal with this issue, in 2009, the Federal Government led by former President Musa Yaradua introduced the amnesty programme which gave amnesty and rehabilitation to repentant militants from Rivers State and the Niger Delta as a whole. This strategy seemed effective as most of the militants gave up their arms and embraced the initiative. This exercise witnessed a total of 26, 808

militants surrendering their arms and ammunition and being granted amnesty, which involved co-opting or integrating them into the society as well as training them (Ajodo-Adebanjoko 2016).

A few years after, however, the government could not sustain efforts in rehabilitating these militants. Consequently, most of them returned to their old lives, creating unrest in most communities in Rivers State. The spate of cultism, kidnapping, thuggery and armed robbery in Rivers State is a proof of this fact. Worst still is the economic impact of this insecurity situation as most communities have been deserted by residents due to cult related violence and properties worth thousands and millions of naira destroyed. This has also affected the operations of multinational companies operating in affected communities as in the case of Omoku and Ogoni where multinationals have had to stop their operations and opted to relocate their head offices to other cities due to insecurity.

Successive governments in the state have adopted the use of traditional policing strategy in curbing insecurity in the state but this seems not to have yielded the much needed result as evident in the continuous killings and violence experienced in the state. It is against this backdrop that a need for a change of approach in curbing insecurity becomes necessary. Since everybody resident and doing business in the community is affected by insecurity, there is a need for an approach that acknowledges the collaborative efforts of all stakeholders in the community in preventing and fighting crime. This is the idea behind community policing.

Clever (2014) noted that community policing ensures that the police and the community share jointly in the responsibility for promoting public safety, and that each has an important role to play. The community here includes all organizations and individuals who have a stake in the community either resident there or doing business as in the case of multinational corporations. Multinational corporations are corporate organizations who own or control production of goods and services in at least one country other than its home country (Root, 2004). Such organizations exist and do businesses in most communities in Rivers State and this makes them stakeholders in the communities as insecurity often times disrupt their businesses. It stands to reason, therefore that they should also be involved in the process of maintaining safe communities where people can live freely and they can carry out their businesses without any disruption. Community policing advocates a collaborative effort of all stakeholders in the community (community members, multinational corporations and other community based organizations) with that of the police to ensure host communities are safe. This paper therefore attempts to examine how this synergy can be made possible.

### **Insecurity**

Insecurity is literally referred to as lack of security. To have a better understanding of the concept, therefore, the term security should be examined critically. Security is a measure that ensures peace and development at large. It guarantees absence of fears, threats, anxieties, tensions, apprehensions of losing life, liberty, property, goals, values etc (Zumve & Torbunde, 2015). Security according to Nwosu (2006) is an all-encompassing condition which suggests that a particular territory must be secured by a network of armed forces, that the sovereignty of the state must be guaranteed by a democratic, responsible and patriotic government, which in turn must be protected by the military, police and the people themselves; that the people must not only be secured from external attacks but also from devastating consequences of internal upheavals such as unemployment, environmental degradation and pollution cum socio-economic injustices.

Insecurity on the other hand is described as the state of being unsafe; liability to give way, be lost, or become unsafe or fraught with danger; want of secureness or stability; instability; liability to damage or loss. Insecurity is a state of being subject to danger or threat. Like the concept of security, scholarly articles on insecurity in the cold-war era emphasized the traditional approach to security which is state-centric. Insecurity was therefore defined as threats to the state and the need to defend the state from such threats which accounted for the race for arms and nuclear weapons. The survival of the state as an entity instead of that of individuals was usually the pre-occupation. The conception of security has however changed and in the post-cold war era the emphasis is now on the security of individuals. Insecurity therefore could be political, social, economic strategic, or ecological in nature. It is in line with this that Zumve and Torbunde (2015) defines insecurity as lack of security to lives and property, lack of justice and respect for lives, lack of basic needs as food, water, shelter and health.

### **Community Policing**

The practice of community policing though relatively new in Nigeria has existed a long time ago around other parts of the world. The need for a people oriented policing was established in America in the 1960s when civil rights movement exposed the weaknesses of the traditional policing model. There was massive protest against the police for discrimination against the blacks. In response to this civil unrest, the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and the Administration of Justice (1967) proposed a more people friendly policing approach called "Team Policing. This was the earliest model of what is known as community policing today (Law Library, 2013). While it is argued that there is no universally accepted definition of community policing, there is a consensus among authors and practitioners that whatever is considered a definition for the concept community policing must take into cognizance the fact that the police and the community must work together to define their problems and provide solutions to them (Bahardir and Erhan, 2011). Supporting this view, Kucukuysal & Beyhan (2011) asserted that community policing includes partnerships between municipal agencies, business communities, individuals, non-governmental organizations and the social media for the development of methods to police the community. Oba in Onyesom (2009) noted that community policing attempts to identify common ground where various factions in a community can work collectively for the common good of the community in a broader problem solving approach. It emphasizes a partnership between the police and community members such that each is accountable to the other with the sole aim of reducing crimes and dealing with disorders and problems in local neighbourhoods.

A more elaborate definition was given by Demsey and Forts in Ezenkwu, Ozuomba and Kalu (2013) when they viewed community policing as a strategy of crime management that deals with the basic causes of crime with the view to developing and applying longer term solutions to resolving issues through improved police community partnership and communication. This definition suggests that community policing is more proactive in approach as it does not only deal with crimes when they happen but also considers measures by which the collective effort of the police and community members can prevent crimes from happening. This of course will ensure a more sustainable peace building effort in communities. Sharing the same line of thought, the Office of Community Oriented Policing (2007) posits that community policing model balances reactive responses to calls for service with proactive-problem solving centered on the causes of crime and disorder. Community policing requires police and citizens to join together as partners in the course of both identifying and effectively addressing these issues.

Onyesom (2009) further asserted that in community policing, emphasis is placed on effective collaboration between the police and the community. The police no longer stand as the sole guardians of law and order; community members become active allies in the effort to ensure safe communities free of crime and criminality.

Community policing is a paradigm shift with a focus on constructive engagement with people who are beneficiaries of police service and re-negotiate the contract between the people and the police thereby making the community equal producers of justice and a quality police service (Okeshola & Mudiare, 2013). This implies that community policing involves conscious effort made by the police to change the traditional way of policing where the job of enforcing law and order becomes a collective one both by the police and community members. Following the same line of thought, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (2013) sees community policing as democracy in action. It requires the active participation of local government, civic and business leaders, public and private agencies, residents, churches, schools, and hospitals. All who share a concern for the welfare of the neighborhood should bear responsibility for safeguarding that welfare. This idea is premised on the fact that those who commit crimes are most times known by the people who are also victims of the inactions of criminals. When they become active allies with police in crime fighting and prevention, they will provide information and take actions that will lead to apprehension of criminals and reduce crimes.

### **Multinational Corporations**

The Business Dictionary defines multinational corporations as enterprises operating in several countries but managed from one (home) country. Generally, any company or group that derives a quarter of its revenue from operations outside of its home country is considered a multinational corporation.

Similarly, there are four categories of multinational corporations: (1) a multinational, decentralized corporation with strong home country presence, (2) a global, centralized corporation that acquires cost advantages through centralized production wherever cheaper resources are available, (3) an international company that builds on the parent corporation's technology or (4) a transnational enterprise that combines the previous three approaches.

### **State of Security in Rivers State**

Insecurity has been a major challenge in Rivers State in the last couple of years. BulkWark Intelligence (2016) reported that crime in Rivers State has reached an alarming level, with assassinations, kidnapping, rape, extortion, armed robbery and murder being carried out on a seemingly daily basis. The situation gets even worse during election season as there is always wide spread violence and criminal activities.

According to a report given by the Partnership Initiative in the Niger Delta (PIND) (2015), in Rivers State, there has been all kinds of criminality and violence occasioned by the activities of cult groups. These groups and networks of groups have wide geographical penetration in the state and are heavily armed. Cult groups in the state as in other states in Nigeria overlap with street gangs, criminal syndicates, youth associations, and other militias. From the more notorious Deebam, Deywell, Greenlanders and Icelanders, to the lesser known Doctor's Squad, Italians, Blood Hunters, Junior Vikings, Bermudas and others, cult groups have proliferated in Rivers State with reach into the communities of Emohua, Ikwerre, Khana, Ogba Egbema Ndoni, Ahoada and the Kalabari and Okrika villages. Activities of these cult groups have led to the loss of many lives, destruction of property worth millions of naira, and the displacement of people from their ancestral homes. For example, communities such as Omoku, Omerelu, Mgbousimini and Ibaa have been deserted in the recent past due to cult related violence which has led to the loss of some lives and destruction of property. Specifically, there has been reported incidences of violent killings, kidnapping and destruction of properties in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni, Obio/Akpor, Ahoada East, Khana, Tai, and Gokana Local Government Areas of Rivers State. Particularly, communities such as Omoku, Mgbousimini, Iba, Bunu Tai, Bakana, Eleme and some communities in Ogoni were deserted at some point in the recent past due to cult related killings and kidnapping. On the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2018, the Vanguard Newspaper reported that about 16 innocent people comprising of men, women and children were murdered on their way back from church service by some cultists resident in Omoku community. The Daily Trust Newspaper also reported the killing of four people on 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2018 in a clash between two communities (Gwara and Gwure in Tai Local Government Area of Rivers State).

### **Multinational Corporations as Partners in Curbing Insecurity in Rivers State: The Community Policing Approach**

Multinational corporations operating in a particular community or neighborhood have the ethical obligation to give back in some way to the community as part of their corporate social responsibility. This view was shared by Gołaszewska-Kaczan in Ojokheta (2018) when he submitted that "corporate involvement in local community's problems creates better ambiance in its surroundings. Similarly, Ojokheta (2018) further submitted that Corporate Social Responsibilities entails that corporations must willing implement actions to improve social welfare, economic condition, security and the environment through strategically planned projects that ensure sustainable benefits the community.

One way multinational corporations can do this is to collaborate with host communities in fighting and preventing crimes. This is necessary because when a community is in crisis, it affects not just community members but companies doing business in the community. This approach is what the community policing model emphasizes. Crime fighting and prevention has taken a new dimension all over the world. The traditional method of policing communities using the police force alone is gradually giving way for what was initially known as team policing or community policing. This approach creates a synergy or partnership between the police and various stakeholders in the community. Kucukuysal & Beyhan (2011) asserted that community policing includes partnerships between municipal agencies, business communities, individuals, non-governmental organizations and the social media for the development of methods to police the community.

It is worthy of note, however, that multinational corporations have not really considered the maintenance of security in the communities they operate in as part of their responsibilities. They have

argued that it is the constitutional responsibility of the government to fight crimes and ensure safe neighborhoods. Consequently, the government has been left to shoulder this responsibility. Unfortunately, the efforts of the government through the Nigerian Police and other security forces have not produced the yielded result. Hence, the need for a partnership that will see community members, multinational corporations and other community based organizations actively involved in the business of fighting crime. This is what Clever (2014) referred to as community partnership which he described as collaborative problem –solving and he identified the potential partners for problem solving efforts to include residents, local and multinational businesses, non-profit organizations, community and faith based leaders and other government agencies. Among other things, Clever noted that these partners can:

1. alert police officers to quality of life issues or underlying conditions that may not be apparent from crime statistics;
2. assist officers in prioritizing the problems that are of greatest concern;
3. identify the approaches that are likely to work best in their neighborhoods;
4. participate in neighborhood watch and other community-based public safety programs;
5. assist the Police and community in identifying and implementing non-enforcement strategies to address neighborhood concerns.

This synergy between multinationals and the community was demonstrated in Omoku town in Ogba/Egbema/Ndoni Local Government Area of Rivers State. This local government area has been a flashpoint for violence, kidnapping, cult activities and brutal killings. The most recent of these killings was the New Year day massacre that led to the death of 16 people comprising of men, women and children who were returning from church the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2018. This killings were orchestrated by some cultists resident in Omoku community (Vanguard, 2018). This is one among so many similar killings and other forms of violence. This community which plays host to most oil multinational corporations like Agip and Total Elf and the likes was at some point deserted by both community members and business owners. Several attempts made by the police and army could not stop the spate of violence and this led to the introduction of a local vigilance group which they called ONELGA Security Planning and Advisory Committee (National Network, 2018). This group though created by the then local government Caretaker Committee Chairman Barrister Osi Olisa has enjoyed enormous support from multinational corporations like Agip oil companies and Total Elf. They gave them financial support, bought vehicles, torchlights and other equipment to aid their work. This led to the effectiveness of this group and they have been able to curb crimes and brought back peace to the crime ravaged community.

This integrated approach to curbing insecurity as adopted in community policing has proved quite effective in managing and preventing crimes in most parts of the world including Nigeria

## **CONCLUSION**

The task of maintaining safe communities must be a collective one for it achieve the desired result. All stakeholders in the community must play their part in curbing insecurity since they are all affected by the impact of crimes and violence. Rivers State in the past few decades has been grappling with the issue of insecurity in its various forms including kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery, militancy and other social vices. Efforts made by successive administrations in the state has not yielded the much needed result as it does not take cognizance the roles of the community, multinational corporations and other community based organization. The need for community policing approach to crime fighting becomes pertinent. Multinational Corporations as part of their corporate social responsibility can collaborate with communities to ensure safer neighbourhoods.

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