

**LOCAL POLICING IN NIGERIA, 1930-1970**

by

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**Abstract**

This paper explains the origin of Local Police and central Police Forces; the nature of local policing and the effect of multiplicity of policing agents. This study however through historical and descriptive methods of research investigates certain erroneous assumptions and generalisations on policing in Nigeria during the colonial era up to the fall of the First Republic in Nigeria; and what accounts for the sustenance of local policing and the forces that led to the collapse. Local policing was terminated not because Local Governments and Native Authorities were not capable of maintaining a disciplined force, but because post-colonial political leaders in the Federal Capital Territory want to have a firm grip and control of the police. This exposed the politics of police control in Nigeria during the period under review. Findings indicate that the reason for the acceptance of local policing in the Northern and South-Western regions of Nigeria was because of their standard recruitment, zero tolerance to corruption and proactive methodology, emphasis on crime prevention through the propagation of virtue and prevention of vices.

**Keywords:** Policing, Alienation, Colonial Heritage, Police Brutality, Public Relations.

## **Introduction**

Local policing means the protection of lives and property; apprehension and detention, prosecution of criminal suspects; the performance of military duties within the country when called upon to do so; and enforcement of all laws with which they are directly charged by the use of indigenes of the community. Local policing operationally is when policing and all its operations and logistics are controlled by governments other than the national or Federal Government (Tangban Audu 2020, p. 42 citing Aremu, 2014).

Security in Nigeria is the responsibility of the Nigerian police force and the army. The high rate of crime in the country presently signifies the weakness or failure of policing agents in the country to curtail crime. Policing agents in Nigeria failed on their part to provide security. The array of insecurity and insurgencies that bedevilled Nigeria over the years, especially since Nigeria's return to a democratic system of governance in 1999 calls for a probe of police efficiency. In agreement with this, Okpewho (2016) notes;

the case of insecurity in Nigeria is such that there appear to be an outburst of violent crimes in the entire polity, which could be likened to a nation convulsing. While Islamist insurgency and ethnic violence thunder in Nigeria's North, Southern Nigeria has continued to groan of youth restiveness, militancy, kidnapping, human trafficking, social unrest and the like.

On this note, economic and political managers, the general public and scholars in Nigeria and the diaspora began to proffer solutions to curb the menace of crime and insecurity in Nigeria. In light of the foregoing, however, historians may look into the past to unravel the security structure of the past which had a close resemblance to the state police people are agitating for its creation. The question to ask is: what is the difference between the two concepts – local police and state police? The point is, that any police force, not controlled, managed or paid by the federal government may be called state police while a police force controlled, managed and paid by Local government, native authority or traditional rulers, is what the researcher refers to as local police. The protection of lives and property, enforcement of tax laws and order, and performance of military duties (policing) by the use of local volunteers flourished in the Northern and South-Western regions of Nigeria. Local policing agents then include Local Government Police Forces (LGPF) in the South-Western region of Nigeria (Lagos colony and nationalities in the hinterland, that is Yoruba-land), Native Authority Police Forces (NAPF) and Vigilante Groups in Northern Nigeria, age grades and Masquerade groups in South-Eastern region

of Nigeria. All, operated side by side with the central or federal police known as the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) during the period of our study. The historical enquiry made the historian to ask what, when, where and how an event unfolds and its effect or impact on society and its correlation with modern society. The question to ask is what problem or benefits did the multiplicity of policing agencies and duplication of function pose to modern society?

### **Statement of Problem**

The problems that provoked this research are:

1. Erroneous assumptions and generalisation by uninformed members of the public and scholars on policing.
2. The origin of an imperial police force and the nature of local policing.
3. Factors that sustained local policing in Nigeria for forty years.
4. Forces that led to the termination of local policing in Nigeria.
5. The impact of local policing on internal security in Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical foundation that guides my analysis and provides a framework for this study is an extant theory of structural functionalism. Functionalism draws its inspiration from the ideas of August Comte (1798-1857), Herbert Spenser (1820-1903), Talott Pearson (1920-1979), Emile Durkheim (1858-1918) and Robert Merton (1910-2003). Mathias (2016, p.14-15) wrote “Functionalism is a theory that sees societies as a complex system whose part works together to promote solidarity and stability. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements, namely: norms, customs, traditions and institutions. A common analogy popularised by Herbert Spenser presents this part of society as “organs” that work towards the proper functioning of the “body” as a whole. For example, each of the social institutions contributes an important function: family provides a context for reproducing, nurturing and socialising children; education offers a way to transmit a society’s skills, knowledge and culture to its young people; politics provides a means of governing members of a society; economics provides for the production, distribution and consumption of foods and services; religion provides moral guidance and outlet for the worship of a higher power; while police provide security of life and property. The functionalist emphasises the interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts. For example, the increase in the number of police personnel available at disposal when local police were formed led to a reduction in the level of crimes the society had to contend with. Elements of society are functional if they contribute to social stability and dysfunctional if they disrupt social stability. For

example, local policing helped in tackling local crimes, allowing federal police to handle inter-regional crimes. Local policing became dysfunctional when local police forces became politicised and corrupt which led to her disbandment. Critics have argued that functionalism is unable to explain social change because it focuses on social order and equilibrium in the society.

### **The Concept of Local Policing and Crime Prevention in Nigeria**

The word police is a plural noun referring to men and women whose job is to prevent crime, keep order, see that laws are obeyed etc. Policing therefore denotes the activities of maintaining security, laws and order in any environment. This might be in a city, a suburb, a state, a nation or parts of a nation. Policing is synonymous with security. Security may be defined as protection from hidden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of living. Alcock (1944, p. 6) wrote that the word POLICE came from France in the fourth century, and it first meant the method of clearing, lighting and repairing any urban area. Today it means a country's arrangement for the maintenance of law and order and the protection of property. Asenime (2014, p. 5), argues that "the police were created primarily in response to rioting and disorder directed against oppressive working and living conditions". Nwaodue (Interviewed 02/06/2022) averred that "anyone entering the police service solely as a means of livelihood will be disillusioned and miserable because the services at all times calls for unconditional self-sacrifice". In Federal Government Orders 1964-Federal Public Service Commission includes, in so far as members of the Nigeria Police Force are concerned the application of Federal Government General Orders to women, chapter 1, No. 01006 says

Notwithstanding that throughout the General Orders the terms Officer, employee and servant are referred to in the masculine gender, the provisions of the General Orders apply equally to women servants except that reference to wives may not be interpreted as meaning husbands.

In pre-colonial Nigeria, traditional institutions and groups were responsible for crime fighting and the maintenance of law and order. In the absence of codified laws, the social structure provided the necessary basis for the regulation of the behavior of members of the society (Asenime 2014, p. 9). Three historical issues are noted –the colonial conquest of the Nigerian peoples, violence employed in their conquest and the police force as an instrument to sustain British alien domination. Fawole (2003, p.150) in agreement with this says the imperial police was employed for the (1) invasion and conquest of Benin kingdom in 1897; (2) the sacking of Sokoto Caliphate and the murder of the last Caliph, Attahiru Ahmadu in 1903; (3) suppression of Egba rebellion in 1918; (4) quelling of Aba Women's Riot of 1929; (5) were sent to enforce payment of taxation; suppress anti-

colonial rebellions and uprisings in other British colonies such as Gold Coast in 1948 and Southern Cameron in 1959.

Organised local policing was never new to colonial Nigeria. For example, the Yoruba, the Ilaris, the Emenses, the Agurens, and others enforced native laws and customs, especially the collection of taxes (Ejalonibu et al 2021, p.6 citing Rotimi, 2011). In the North, there were Dogaris who served as bodyguards to the Emirs. His duty includes capturing and disciplining offenders. Okpewho (2020, p.582) posits that the Igbo people “like all other Nigerian peoples, who do not accept one central authority, their system of government was gerontocracy. The village clan councils which formed the basis of local government have been described and classified by scholars as “conciliar in nature”.

Crime has been described as a restless and ubiquitous foe and thus instances in which it may escape the watch of police may be greater than imagined. Local policing involves armed patrols, raids of ‘black spots’ and beat duty. Alcock (1944, p. 6) listed the principles of beat duty for local policing in Nigeria as

- a. Obtain a good knowledge of the local community, including the local thieves and their methods
- b. Maintain good relations with all other public and utility services
- c. On no account idle or gossip. This means a relaxation of vigilance.
- d. Pay careful attention to all property, particularly that which is accessible, i.e., is insecure owing to its position or its structure etc., backs onto water or a railway.
- e. Be suspicious- However, a great deal of commonsense or discretion is necessary in this respect.
- f. Give special care to the aged and children.
- g. Be at all times well turned out and smart.

The word ‘policing’ is not entirely new to the nationalities, kingdoms and empires that form present-day Nigeria. Before the advent of the colonialists, various nationalities in Nigeria policed their communities, protected the lives and properties of their kings and rulers, observed beat duty and patrols, arrested and punished social deviants. According to Tamuno (1970),

long ago before the British invasion of Nigeria, there existed some forms of traditional policing among the various states, kingdoms and empires that constitute the present Nigeria. These were said to have discouraged vices and mischief and by extension provided an effective policing system in pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria.

A system of surveillance and threat of sanction for discovered deviation was created but was not documented as histories due to illiteracy. The history of this activity was derived through oral tradition and oral sources. One can boldly quote Kochhar (1984, pp.1-3) that

“history is a dialogue between the events of the past and progressively emerging future ends”.

The hierarchy of the NPF runs from the patrol team to the force headquarters (Aderinto 2014, p. 62 citing Alemika 2010). It was recorded that, “during the colonial period, police were associated with local government (Native Authorities), but by the 1960s under the First Republic, these forces were regionalised and then nationalised” (Aderinto 2014, p. 61). Public notice No. 68 of 1939 republished –emergency powers (Defence) Act 1939 of Nigeria General Defence Regulation 1941 Section 2 gave the police power to impose charges or fines on deviant behaviors, eminent suspects and airing members of the public when arrested and detained before being granted bail or charged to court. Defence regulations may: -

- a. Make provision for the apprehension, trial, and punishment of persons offending against the regulations, and for the detention of persons whose detention appears to the secretary of state to be expedient in the interests of the public safety or the defence of the realm.
- b. Authorise the entry and search of any premises, and
- c. Provide for amending any enactment, for suspending the operation of any enactment, for applying any enactment with or without modification. The powers of the chiefs and traditional rulers (now known as Native Authorities) were extended and consolidated under the laws of 1916 and 1924.

### **The Origin of Imperial Police Force and the Nature of Local Policing**

The Native Authority ordinance conferred on the chiefs the responsibility for maintaining order in their areas of responsibility or jurisdiction, were allowed to prevent crimes, and arresting offenders by employing any person to assist them. Palace messengers, the akodas of the Yoruba kings were recognised and reformed as Olopas, while in the Emirates of the North, the palace Dogarai also were recognised and reformed as Yan/Dan doka (Aleyomi, 2013, p. 4). These traditional police constituted the nucleus of local police forces of the colonial era. Egba United government established an Egba police on the 27th of July, 1903 (NAI, Egba Native Authority General Regulations 1951). The members of this police were drawn from ‘ode’ called native hunters and they were charged with the original police duty of fighting crime and armed robbery. In the Northern states, the Dogari “protects members of the society from deviance, preserves their faith, guarantees the welfare and security of the people and enforces Sharia law and orders made by the colonial masters through the emir” (Sule 2020, pp.187-219). Cases were referred to the local forces/emirate from the police stations in some parts of the northern states, largely on immoral/deviant misconducts (Audu Kawu, interviewed

12/05/2022). Law enforcement methodology here is largely pro-active resulting to mutual trust, positive relationship with both the public and the police.

Alemika (1993), averred that “police forces established in Nigeria since British colonial rule has consistently been repressive, corrupt, and inefficient. Police and sister security agencies continued to be used in a way that stifles democracy and impedes social justice”. The police boss and politicians are to be blamed for that. According to Mordi (2018, p.2039), “... scholars have tended to adopt the position foreshadowed by the press that politicians should be held solely responsible for the failure of democratic governance” during the period. Just as the police is to provide security and enforce laws. The uniqueness of Local Government Police Force and Native Authority Police Force (LGPF/NAPF) was mentioned by Abdul and Mustapha (2016, p.3) when they wrote that “... the ability of the volunteer to align its interests with those of important government institutions like legislature and executive; and the ability to establish functioning relationships with the Nigeria Police Force”.

In modern Nigeria, the categories of traditional rulers include the Mai/Shehu of Borno, the Habe and Emir rules in Hausa-land, the Oba in Yoruba-land, the Akran in Egu-land, the Etsu in Nupe-land, the Obi/Eze in Igbo-land and many others; all were recognised and used for crime prevention by colonial administrators during the period of our study. Crime prevention/policing in Igbo-land in colonial Nigeria is an interesting one because the operatives carried out the task of peace education, prevention, conflict management and resolution. The operatives of these institutions according to Afigbo (1981) includes ezi (family); okpara (elders) man holding ancestral spear (alo and ofo); umunna or umokpu (females born in a clan); Amala (council of elders); nzuko obodo (village/town assembly); oha-na-eze (meeting of the king and people); ndi isi obodo (village heads); ndimmanwu (masquerade people); otu ogbo (age grades); otu ndi nta (hunters association); ndi chili echichi (titled men, example ozo title holders); agbara (oracle/deities). Just as functionalism theory emphasises interconnectedness of society by focusing on how each part influences and is influenced by other parts, this study emphasises the interconnectedness, functions or influence of Igbo traditional institutions on Igbo societies or community and vice-versa. Elders from neighboring towns/villages, super natural forces –deities/oracles were noted for impartiality and effectiveness in delivering just judgment and instant punishment. Example, ibinukpabi (long juju of Arochukwu), Igwekala of umunnoha in Owerri, Okumeshi of Amai, Amadioha of Ozuzu, Ekwensu of Anaku, Urashi of Okija; Ogwugwu Akpu, Adofi of Ukwani, Mkpitime of Aniocha-land. Nwelene (Interviewed 20/05/2022) submits that of great importance was the issue of reconciliation and restoration of social harmony among disputants in Igbo-land. The Europeans thrive on commissions of enquiry, the constitution and the court

system of lawyers and judges. Africans use councils of elders, kings' courts, peoples' assemblies and others for dispute management and justice dispensation.

Some local governments had their own vigilante groups or something akin to local police forces established by law in all parts of South-Eastern part of Nigeria during the period under review. Their existence suggested that there was a policing gap which they legally or illegally filled. At that time, many of those security outfits were operating whimsically and arbitrarily (Interviewed Egwu, 01/06/2022).

Islam also checkmated crime in colonial Nigeria. Moch et al (2020, p.158), "Islam teaches its adherents to apply religious teachings in Kaffah (perfect, totality and overall), that Islam prevents laziness and dependence, but encourages people to become entrepreneurs who need government support in the financial, social and legal fields". In agreement to this, Mohd Ab Malek et al (2013, p.63) posits that "...it is an obligation imposed upon each and every individual Muslim to prevent the commission of any sinful act (crime), by using any means, including the power we have" (force).

Tangban & Audu (2020 p. 45) observed that "the decision to completely handover policing to the federal government in Nigeria was premised on the obnoxious assumption that the federating states in Nigeria and local government lack the power to maintain a disciplined force, especially against the back drop of the experience of the first Republic". In the South-West and the North, for instance, the use of political thugs in native police uniforms by politicians led to the outbreak of operation Wete and the Tiv riots, respectively which were some of the remote causes of the January 15, 1966 military take-over in the Nigeria (Tangban & Audu 2020, p. 46 citing of Aleyomi, 2015, p. 21).

Monye (Interviewed 01/06/2022) says that "the Igbo's during our period of study had their local police force which engaged themselves in various duties such as traffic control, sanitation, eradication of illegal trading, mopping off major roads of abandoned, illegally and sometimes legally parked vehicles and others and that the level of fraud and brutality with which they worked or operated gave them the name Ndi Mpiawa Azu". There is a questionable assumption that the media, judiciary, labor union, opposition parties and civil society groups remained meekly silent while local government ridden roughshod over the citizens up to 1966. Mordi (2010, p.87) observed the inter-racial cooperation and collaboration for the defeat of Nazism with the press acting as the driving force and great mobiliser at a critical stage during the war when the morale of the Allied Forces was abysmally low. This was unlikely to be the case because of the plurality of media ownership, civil society groups, the judiciary and the proactive stance of the civil population. All these checked and balances of power by the chief executive of local/native authorities deploying local police forces against opponents.

Fawole (2003, p.151) added that the new rulers of post-colonial Nigeria inherited the mantle of authoritarian rule and were not trained in the art and practice of democratic

politics while under colonial rule. Ifidon (2003, p.171) averred that “ethnicity serves as a basis for exclusion. If nation-building is the goal of political development, citizenship is a veritable instrument but ethnicity is a formidable impediment” to progress among the Native Authorities. As Native Authorities (NA), the chiefs had their police powers extended and consolidated under NA Ordinance No. 4 of 1916 and 1924 which conferred on them the responsibility of maintaining order in their respective areas. From 1930 to 1960, NAPF, LGPF and NPF were policing the country through armed mobile patrols, raids, arrests and detentions in protection of the colonial economy (Asenime 2014, p.12 citing Onoge, 1993, p. 178). Achebe (2012, p. 48 & 49) pointed out that “the dawn of World War II caused a bit of a lull in the organised independence struggles.... Most of the world’s attention including Nigeria’s was turned to war. Schools and other institutions (including police) were converted into make-shift camps for soldiers from the empire”, and there was a great deal of local military recruitment.

Fawole (2003, p. 150) rightly said the primary role of the police is policing – securing compliance with existing laws and conformity with precepts of social order. According to Fawole (2003, p.151) the police are organised to defend and represent the interests of the dominant groups and classes in society. Nwogwugwu and Kupoluyi (2015, p.5) states that

Going by history, nothing has changed in the condition that initially led to the demise of native police in the first instance. Again, the involvement of thugs in native police uniforms by politicians led to ‘operation wet e’. and, the case of ‘operation wet e’ coupled with some other factors served as the remote causes of the 15th January, 1966 military takeover in Nigeria.

Between 1966 and 1979 the police were co-opted into governance by the military as state governors and members of the national ruling council...instead of equipping the police to serve as the primary tool for promoting and protecting internal security (Aleyomi 2013, pp.5-6). Alemika and Chukwuma (2000, p.2), state that “the police played important roles without which the sustenance of order, legality, development and democracy may be difficult. Therefore, any poverty elevation program or policy must take account of the police in society”.

Mordi (2009, p.243) observed that “popular belief in the helplessness of the military situation generated palpable anxiety in Nigeria. Nigerians were alarmed about what fate would befall them ‘if the Huns come’, more so when British recruitment policy guaranteed no opportunity to the colonised for his self-defense”. According to Mordi (2009, p.249), towards the end of the Second World War, induced hardships and the failure of the colonial government to abide by its 1942 promise to approve wage review to reflect the cost of living index resulted in a general strike by African Civil Servants Technical Workers’ Union, which lasted for 44 days beginning from 21st June 1945. For

this purpose, it is imperative to study colonialism and development of police in Nigeria. This leads us to the study of the colonial origin of Nigeria Police. Omeni (2022, p.1), states that “the NPF has grown to be the largest police force in Africa, its origin goes as far back into Nigeria’s colonial past as 1861”.

As for Informal policing (Vigilantism): Vigilante groups in Nigeria exist to help guarantee security, law, order, and stability to the citizens of each community. Aderinto (2014, p. 62) posits that vigilantism in Nigeria is not only a social or community reaction to crime, it is also a top-down political response to security problems. Vigilante organisations existed in various parts of Nigeria before and during colonial era in various names. In Issele-uku, they were referred to as “Awolo-no-nche”, in Umuahia “ndi nche abali”, in Badagry “samgbetor” and in the North-Benue State as “oror”. They patrol around the community in groups mostly at night on foot, bicycle or motorised vehicles if available. (Interviewed Onoja, S. 29/06/2022).

Aderinto (2014, p.63 citing Okafor 2007) opined that vigilante groups usually comprise able-bodied young men of each community, who are supported financially and materially by the community members. They are charged with the task of scrutinising activities of the residents, monitoring the movements of strangers and people with sudden wealth, identification of every house in the ward and so on (Aderinto 2014, p. 63 citing Fourchard, 2008). Local policing promoted the flow of information from vigilante and local police forces to the central police force (Interviewed K. O. Chidi 20/05/2022).

The local police forces were visible, accessible cooperative and available for consultation; prompt in responding to complaints and threats; and faced no language or communication barrier. They were accountable to the Native Authorities and traditional chiefs who hired them. They were properly monitored for effectiveness and standard service delivery (Interviewed Nwaolai 22-11-2022). The high visibility of patrols gains the confidence and cooperation of citizens and builds confidence in the locals to provide information and seek assistance.

Local policing improved the ratio of available policemen to the country’s teeming population which based on evidence was grossly inadequate for handling both internal and external security challenges. Umoh (2015, p. 420) asserted that most crimes are local, hence, there was a need for local police formations in Nigeria. The close watch supervision by traditional chief, authorities did ensure that according to Umoh (2015, p. 420) – ethnic sentiments do not come into play in the dispensation of justice, especially where non-indigenes are concerned. Nwaelene (Interview cited) averred that “the design and development of local police was to provide the federal police with additional manpower but more crucially, in the post-independence era to enhance their relationship with the public”. One major challenge facing local policing is the issue of political interference - Policing in Nigeria during the first republic witnessed politicians –

“Interfering with the structure and operations of the force thus making the police force a personal property of power accumulation... directly or indirectly” (Akinyetun 2016, 763).

### **Evolution of Native Police in Northern Nigeria**

The British themselves encouraged the evolution of Native Authority Police in Northern Nigeria. Having realised that the institution of Emirship was strong in the North, Lord Lugard, the governor of Northern Nigeria decided to strengthen the existing ‘Dogaris’. According to Rotimi (2011, p.5) four reasons for granting recognition to native police in the North are: (1) the need to secure the loyalty of the emirs and chiefs; (2) the desire and need to build native administration; (3) the need to reduce cost of administration by way of indirect rule; (4) the need to take side with the Hausa in battle for racial superiority with southerners. Moch et al. (2020,p.159) state that “Islam forbids Muslims to work at will to achieve their desires by justifying all means such as fraud, cheating, false oaths, usury, bribes and other vanity acts”. Section 105 (7) of the 1963 constitution of Nigeria permitted the regional legislature to make provisions for laws for the maintenance of Local/NAPF. Thus, policing became the responsibility of colonial police and Local/NAPF until 1968 when LGPF/NAPF was disbanded. To Reiner et.al (2016) policing is ambivalent; its repressive functions reproduce the dominant social order and yet the activity of peacekeeping- if it is done well enough- can also contribute generally to the beneficent social order. Nigeria's police system became unified in February 1968 while existing personnel were all absorbed into NPF on or before 1970.

The high visibility of patrols gains the confidence and cooperation of citizens and builds confidence in the locals to provide information and seek assistance. They were cooperative and open to community consultation. It also adopted a proactive policy stance. It was prompt in responding to complaints and threats since it faced no language or communication barrier. Public notice No. 85 of 1941, public notice No. 68 of 1939 republished –emergency powers (Defense) Act 1939 of Nigeria General Defense Regulation 1941 Section 2 gave the police power to impose charges or fines on deviant behaviors, eminent suspects and airing members of the public when arrested and detained before being granted bail if they fulfil the conditions for bail. They were accountable to the Native Authorities and traditional chiefs who hired them. They were properly monitored for effectiveness and standard service delivery (Interviewed Nwaolai 12-05-2022). Native Authority police, a Local government police force just like the central police force also made use of discretionary powers while on duty especially while carrying fire-arms even though Europeans also supervised them for instance, (NAI, File No.29880/S.1.p.9) “... it is advisable to retain the discretionary powers afforded by Force Orders No.16 of 1939 in so far as ordinary police duties are concerned”. Alemika

(2000, p.9) citing Onoge (1993, p.178) explains the character and impact of colonial political economy on policing and police when he wrote

The burden of colonial policing was the subordination of the national interests of the people to the political and economic interests of the state.

Through armed patrols, raids, arrests and detention, the colonial police protected the colonial economy by policing labor. As the people had no checks over the arbitrariness of the police, they either avoided 'police trouble' or mediated inevitable contacts with bribe offerings.

However, contrary to this, Mitema (interviewed 06/07/2022) captured that arbitrariness of police was checked by police monitoring teams popularly known as Xsquad or 'mosquito' in police circle; team or unit commanders as well as incident duty Senior Police Officers (SPO's). There has never been a time, when room was given, for arbitrariness in policing. Indeed, about seventeen African nations gained their independence in 1960 (Opone, 2010, p.115). Even after independence, by 1970 precisely, police personnel continue in like manner to embrace corruption, apply force and lethal weapons in the arrest of crime suspects, detention and investigation activities and the provision of protection and security services.

### **The Impact of Local Policing in Internal Security in Nigeria.**

1. Operatives of the local police helped guarantee security, law, order, and stability to the citizens of each community where they reside or operate.
2. As earlier mentioned, quoting and oral source, "local policing promoted the flow of information from vigilante and local police forces to the central police force".
3. Local policing solved the problem of acute shortage of manpower in the police force; and strengthened the practice of federalism in Nigeria.
4. It investigated local crimes and relieved the federal police of the duty of investigating local crime. The federal police became occupied with the investigation of inter-state or inter-regional crime.
5. Again, they were useful in gathering useful and sensitive security information that aided the policing agents in their busting operations.
6. Finally, local policing brought police closer to the people and bridged the communication gap between police and the masses through the creation of interpersonal relationships. They were not seen as strangers since they were natives/indigenes of the community.

### **Conclusion/ Recommendation**

Local policing in this study is a term that collectively describes policing activities by all policing agents especially volunteers/ personnel of the native authority police

force. The nature and impact of local policing were analysed. From the study, it was observed that imperial policing was brutish, bestial, lacked respect for human rights and protected British selfish interests. This made the citizens of Nigeria cynics of police and saw all policing efforts as motivated by selfish interest. Nigeria's successive governments have over the years failed to address the issue of police-civilian face-off. Policing in the post-colonial era followed a similar pattern; this time, the focus was on the protection of the interests of a few property-owning classes (the political leaders). Thus a need to examine a new approach towards reconciling the police with the public and vice-versa. It is against this backdrop that the researcher recommends policing with a human face, posting policemen back to their local government of origin and a nationwide sensitization program captioned police-is-your-friend.

Evidence from research indicates that the dominant narrative that the central police force alone provided efficient internal security in the country; and that policing agents in colonial Nigeria up to the fall of the First Republic had a good police-civilian interface is an erroneous assumption or generalisation. Secondly, findings from the research also show that police forces at this period were trained to protect the ruling class and defend the state institutions or machinery, enforce all laws for which they are directly charged, defend policies and programs of the government (be it popular or anti-people), suppression of riots, demonstrations and restiveness and enforcement of tax laws. The police force after independence in 1960 did not witness any important change except that its colonial controllers were changed. For decades (1905 - 1960), imperial policing helped both mercantilist companies and the British crown to further their commercial/political interests within the country.

Political scientists, historians, scholars, and analysts have indeed discussed policing in the past. However, none of them addressed its correlation with the indirect rule system of colonial administration. Local policing in Nigeria started in 1930 when the Native Authorities and the chiefs had their police powers extended and consolidated under Native Authority Ordinance No. 4 of 1916 and 1924 which conferred on them the responsibility of maintaining order in their respective areas. In 1930, local police forces were established in the Northern and South-Western Region of Nigeria. This means that local policing started in 1930 as dictated by indirect rule policy adopted by colonial administrators. Indirect rule policing encouraged the adoption of local policing model. Local policing in effect eliminated language barriers to effective policing as the operatives functioned in environments they were familiar with. Local policing which in effect means decentralization of policing aligned with the principles of federalism which Nigeria claims to practice.

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