

**WHY A ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL APPROACH NO LONGER FITS NIGERIA: A PSYCHOAFRICALYTIC NOTE ON THE NEED FOR INDEPENDENT JURISDICTIONAL POLICE ALONG WITH THE PRISON (CORRECTIONS) AND THE COURT SYSTEMS IN NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper introduces the need to pursue the full decentralization of the police and other related justice operations and systems in the country as one-size-fits-all approach to policing, prisons and the judiciary is no longer workable in terms of a functional internal security. Furthermore, in this paper, ways to develop and professionalize the police on a State and localized level is revealed.

**KEYWORDS:** Police, State, Nigeria, America, Prison, Court

**INTRODUCTION**

The national interest around law and order could be served better as different State or local governments more fully and stringently takes greater interest in protecting its people and properties (Oshodi, 2010).

The creation and maintenance of a highly decentralized system of criminal justice is of utmost need in Nigeria: a society where various ethnic groups have never considered themselves part of the same culture. Present day Nigeria remains a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse federation which consists of an estimated number of 206 million people, with over 250 ethnic groups, and 1150 dialects.

The continued centralization of the police, prison/corrections, and judicial power in the country reminds all of us of the saying that a one-size-fits-all approach to policing, prisons and the judiciary is just no longer workable in terms of functional internal security operations.

I will focus more on Nigeria Police Force which has been a topical matter in discussions across the nation in terms of its significance to the entire criminal justice system, which include the prisons/corrections, the courts, and a fully improved security across local and regional territories in the country (<https://guardian.ng/opinion/confusing-state-police-with-community-policing/>, 05/12/2019).

Police/policing needs to be free to do its job without political interference and oversight from the unitary system that breathes down its neck. Politics and policing should not mix, but it will continue as

long as a Federal posted commissioner to a State has to get final permission from the IGP who answers to the President to carry out local, state or regional police duty.

With a State (and/or local governments police) system through its independent jurisdictional policing authorities, there is less inefficiency, less incredible ineffectiveness, and more citizen engagement. For example, in the USA, what we have are specific federal police establishments like the Supreme Court police, congressional or Capital police, and others. None of them can interfere in local/State affairs. There are no unitary or federal police that encompasses all law enforcement powers in the United States of America.

The following can continue to provide national based duties: Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), State Security Services (SSS), the Nigerian Immigration Service (NIS), the Independent Corrupt Practices and other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) and the Nigeria Security Civil Defense Corps (NSCDC). They will have the power to conduct sensitive investigations like the conducts of governors as it imparts on national interest.

The Nigeria Security Civil Defense Corps (which I suggest should be renamed as Civil Defense and Homeland Security) should take a more major role of combating crime as its trans-national functions greatly imparts national security. Fire service, forest policing, traffic police must come under State jurisdiction. The work of a separated police system in form of a State Police will produce a more pronounced beneficial change within a state government with the prisons/corrections and judiciary (the courts) equally independent to maintain well- formed structural autonomy for the Criminal Justice System under each State government.

Federal law enforcement agencies with specialized services should remain in existence or merged into the police force as a unit, like the Nigeria Drug Law Enforcement Agency and Postal Police officials.

We must re-establish the Nigeria police force into independent State police entities. With a thirty-six (36) states police systems that are independent and geographically divided into 36 local regions which are more community based, accountable, and inclined.

Activities like recreation, services, transportation, infrastructure, decision making, institutional behavior, performance and institutional discipline are quicker to get addressed.

We know nations with young-aged population will have higher and more crime rate, so with localized policing available and community oriented young men and women are immediately available for employment.

## **MERITS OF STATE POLICE**

- ❖ Time, space, energy to the people is more organized.
- ❖ Citizen trust and relations are better managed, reduces cost, and responsiveness to local needs.
- ❖ State police system (and/or local government police) will be more mission driven, more needs accountable, and more effective service provision oriented.
- ❖ Less problematic in responding to the need of retirees and the disables.
- ❖ Citizens will find themselves coming more in contact on a daily basis with more endearing socially, linguistically, and culturally oriented officers.
- ❖ Citizens are more likely to exercise less fears over the possible misuse of abuse of police power as the state legislature and judiciary will act as a consistent check on behalf of the people.
- ❖ Provide law enforcement career opportunities and financial stability for young men and women in the State.
- ❖ Mutual aid by state or localized police system to other law enforcement agencies at federal level, especially during a natural disaster or major territorial incidents will be more achievable given the better under local police officers due to their marked understanding of the communities.
- ❖ State police system allows for more concentration in problem solving work and becomes more community focused.
- ❖ With a State police system, there is direct accountability to the local authorities.
- ❖ State police system will allow for a more focused security budgets, manageable communication equipment system, better training and alignment with the local communities.
- ❖ Create its state's public participation in police performance and its relationship with the public
- ❖ More responsible to the people they serve.

In actuality, the maintenance of a national federal police like the NPF (Nigeria Police Force) is inherently a violation to our American induced Constitution. In actuality, within the settings of multi-ethnic, tribal and religious Nigeria, police forces under the control of the states or local governments would be congruent with Nigeria's plural type of federal system regionally and geographically (<https://www.cfr.org/blog/prospect-local-policing-amid-security-breakdown-nigeria>, 07/14/2020)

There is need to encourage civilian oversight boards on both police level and for specific acts like helping to review public complaints. Let's change from "order from above" to "order from the State" and see real changes in tackling the dwindling security challenges in Nigeria.

This is the moment to root out our ongoing chaotic criminal justice system and if our various regions and local communities are to reimagine public safety for the benefit of everyone, a fair and equitable treatment of our current unitary criminal justice system should start with the urgent decentralized the police, followed by other systems of the criminal justice like the prisons/corrections and the courts.

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