Assessment of Community Policing in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Addis Ababa City, Ethiopia

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Abstract: Community policing is a paradigm shift established at the bedrock of community partnership in creating safe and secure environment for all. This paper sort to shade light on the role of community policing in conflict resolution and peace building in Addis Ababa city, by focusing on its major challenges and prospects. In order to better achieve its objective the article has employed a qualitative research method. The study used Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews. The results of this study reveal that before the introduction of community policing crime of robbery, theft, mugging, snatching, rape, and violence were most predominantly happen in the city. But after the city practiced community policing most crimes reduced. Anti-social problems, weak community participation of the, lack of adequate training or any training and the recent political unrest in the city challenges the effectiveness of community policing in resolving conflicts and building the peace of the city.

Keyword- Community, Policing, Conflict, Resolution, Peace, Building

1. Introduction

Community policing was first introduced in the USA in the 1960s to increase police community contact and reduce fear of crime (Cordner, 1999; Innes, 2003; cited in Coquilhat, September 2008) and later became a principal policing strategy during 1990s (Coquilhat, September 2008). Community policing encompasses a variety of philosophical and practical approaches and still evolving rapidly. Its strategies vary depending on the needs and responses of the communities involved. However, certain basic principles and considerations are common to all community policing efforts. United States America Department of justice define community policing as: a new philosophy of policing based on the concept that police officers and community working together in of life in their neighborhoods (Fisher-Stewat, 2007). Others also define a paradigm shift established at the bedrock of community partnership in creating safe and secure environment for all and the people take active part in their own affairs (Mulugeta and Mekuriaw, 2017). This fact indicates the need of involving the community, the local government and the police to work together to tackle and prevent crime and protect human rights violations (Skogan andHartnett, 1977).

Community policing was also initiated in South Africa in the early 1990's. It was aimed at democratizing and legitimizing the police. Later there was a shift towards improving service delivery and tackling crime issues. The initiative succeeded in building trust between citizens and the police. "The police shall endeavor to protect the people of South Africa from all crime acts and shall by the belief that they are accountable to society in rendering their policing services and shall therefore conduct themselves so as to secure and retain the respect and approval of the public. Through such accountability and friendly, effective and prompt service, the police shall endeavor to obtain the operation of the public whose partnership in the task of crime control and prevention is essential" (Peace Accord of South Africa 1999).

Community policing in Ethiopia was started officially as a police approach at the national level in 2012 but there was some works related to community policing were applied in its basic form inpolicing training by British trainers in Addis Ababa and some senior officers also took further training in Europe (Lisa and Demelash, 2013).

Implemented as part of broader police reforms since 2006, community policing has emerged in a surprisingly top-down manner for a practice that is, according to some, meant to be a bottom-up approach of monitoring police behavior (Greene and Kebede, 2012, Wisler and On wudiwe, 2009). Police and politicians essentially announced to communities that community policing would be the new policing approach. This introduction led to the inclusion of community policing in the training curriculum at the Ethiopian Police University College. Pilot community policing programmes were also carried out in Addis Ababa and the four advanced regional states (Addis Ababa city administration, Tigray, Oromia and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's) (Greene and Kebede, 2012). In Addis Ababa city administration, a regional community policing strategy was developed by the Addis Ababa city administrationPolice Commission in 2005 and, based on this; community awareness program was conducted about the importance of passing information onto police. Community policing training was integrated into Addis Ababa city administration Regional Police training. However, the placing of Community Police Officers in communities was not undertaken until 2008, except some communities only receiving Community Police Officers. An internal evaluation of this strategy by the Addis Ababa city administration Police Commission in 2010 has informed the development of a second regional

community policing strategy, a draft of which is currently before the Regional Parliament.

Despite the establishment of community policing and numerous efforts by various police administrations to curtail the level of crime and violence in Ethiopia, crime and social disorder still persist in the country. With growing urbanization and national development, there are signs of complexity and multiplicity of criminal offenses and violent acts.

2. Statement of the Problem

Policing as a law enforcement activity is a challenging task owing to multitude of significant responsibilities including the maintenance of law and order and conflict resolution. Police officers are regularly called upon to deal with conflict situations. These conflicts range from acting as a mediator in a domestic dispute, to restoring order (Braithwaite, 1996). Police forces are a very significant part of any community and therefore, the cordial and amicable relations between the police and the community remain vital for not only controlling any crime but also in resolving conflict.At community level, the sources of conflict range from trivial to complex property disputes, domestic violence, street fights, crime against children and women. The conflict resolution at community level is under jurisdiction of police agencies. Needless to add that conflict resolution remainvital to impart buoyancy and attain community resilience.

Addis Ababa city administration is often considered as a model in community policing in Ethiopia. However, it is impossible to get statistics on its effectiveness in the region though its role in improving communities' access to policing services, assisting in reducing crime and providing the state with more effective surveillance of the population is apparent. In Addis Ababa city administration, a regional community policing strategy was developed by the Addis Ababa city administration Police Commission in 2005 and, based on this; community sensitization was conducted about the importance of passing information onto police. In 2010 this training was to be extended with the support of a Canadian police consultant who assisted the Addis Ababa city administration Police Commission in developing a new curriculum but it is unclear whether this curriculum has in fact been implemented. They have indicated the presence of 11 zones; 140 woredas and approximately 3,429 kebeles (In rural areas, usually the lowest administrative level but in urban areas with higher population density, can be further broken into centers, ketenas and blocks).

Community policing philosophy in Addis Ababa city was started in 2009 in five ketenas; currently it is implemented in all ketenas of the city. This has involved the creation of an implementation plan regarding community policing, giving workshop training for community policing officers, and police department heads and station commanders, including various parts of community and institutions. Furthermore, the establishment of community policing structure from household level (family police) to kebele community policing Advisory council has been taken as dare attempt to implement community policing in the study area.

Police is expected to discharge its responsibilities under the boundary of its jurisdiction. Working with due respect the rights of citizens from any form of violation by other person are the prime aims in police services. The resolution of conflict and building peace by police is one jurisdiction police officers with in the community. In Addis Ababa city, there are several crimes and community based violence's due to the growing urbanization and complex living style of the city. The most common, serious and repeated crimes in the cityare body injury, assault, burglary, child labor, domestic violence, rape, attempt murder, murder and group bullying (Temsky, 2015).Recently the city is also experiencing social, cultural, economic and political divergences that could cause violence. The social factors include the presence of high youth unemployment and community mobility is challenging the effort to maintain process and be misused by others for their personal and political gain in non-peaceful means. The situations stated abovehad a great impact on establishing sustainable peace in the city.Therefore, to resolve conflicts and build peace the community policing is best model of policing, because the overall purpose of community policing is to prevent crimes effectively through the full involvement of citizens building sustainable peace.According to some researches that after the implementation of community policing in Addis Ababa city to some extent reduced crimes particularly minor crimes.However, it cannot stop or reduce conflicts and helps to maintain peace. This shows that there exist limitations on community policing practice in maintaining peace in Addis Ababa city.

Despite the many challenges the police forces in Addis Ababa city are trying to deal with maintain the peace of the city. The challenge that community policing have been facing are not well identified. Therefore, the general objective of this study is to assess the challenges and prospectsof community policingin resolution of conflict and buildingpeace in Addis Ababa city. Following this introduction, the second section examines the methodology while the third sectionbriefly analysis challenges that are affecting the resolution of conflict and building peace in Addis Ababa city. The fourth section of this article deals with conclusion and recommendation.

3. Research Methods

The article was conducted with the objective of assessing the challenges and prospects of community policing in resolution of conflict and building peace in Addis Ababa city. Hence, in order to better achieve its objective thearticle has employed a qualitative research method.The unit of analysis of the article is basically the community policing officers and the local communities.

For the purpose of this article, five police stations (Community Centers) in Addis Ababa were selected. The method used in the article was Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and in-depth interviews. Purposive sampling was used for in-depth interviews

from police personnel and participants for community FGDs.The researcher conducted FGDs that are of equal number of participants and gender representation as well since differences between people can be considered as the possible opportunity for researcher to garner different perspectives.

With a purpose of finding out the actual contribution of the community policing, the researcherhave conducted two FGDs that are of 9 and10 members of community members and peace committee representatives respectively.Moreover, the researcher interviewed 15 community members and 8 police officers to gain better insight.

4. Description of the Study Area
Addis Ababa is one of the three metropolitan cities in Addis Ababa city administrationState, which is found at Central Addis Ababa Administrative Zone surrounded by Lay-Armacheho, Dembya and Addis Ababa Zuryaworedas. Addis Ababa is also known historically as the capital city of Ethiopia in the ancient period and the home of Fasil castle and other recognized world heritages. According to Addis Ababa city Information Office (2010) Addis Ababa is the former capital city of Ethiopia was bring into being in 1635 during Emperor Fasil Regime and it has the long history place in the country. Addis Ababa is situated at 748 km from Addis Ababa and 182 km from Bahir Dar. Addis Ababa city has an area of 5560 hectare. The city is located at N 120 401 and E 370 451. Its climate has an average annual temperature of 19-20 degree Celsius and average annual rain fall amount 1800mm. The elevation varies from 2000-22000m above sea level. The population of the city according to CSA 2007 estimated 206, 987 out of which 98,085 are male and 108,902 female. The city served with an international airport, digital telephone communication, 24 hours hydro-electric power and have an inter-urban road which covers a distance of 41 kilometer asphalt and 65 kilometer gravel road. The city has also conducive land transportation access to the south with Addis Ababa, west with Sudan, north with Axum, and northwest with Humera.

5. Results and Discussion
Addis Ababa city have 46 community police centers at different areas in addition to 6 police

stations that had already been existed, by which community's access to legal entity in a short distance perked up. Many respondents and discussants portrayed that, as a result of this community policing centers at katena level, some problem are being solved at the center since people are reporting case to police officers.

In Addis Ababa city, as the data obtained from the respondents portrayed that crime of robbery, theft, mugging, snatching, rape, and violence were most predominantly happen in the city before community policing become a neighborhood agenda. "Before introducing community policing in the area, robbery was highly prevailed than the crime types mentioned above".In urban settings, crime and violence, often associated with the trafficking of guns, drugs or human beings, can be seen as the only option for many young people, yet it is one which is of huge cost to them, and to their families and communities (Shaw and Carli 2011).

As one FGD's participants elucidated that Physical assaults that are inflicted by young individual also perpetuated even if community policing centers are established in the city. Moreover, FGD's participants explained that "People are still mugged and assaulted especially during the night time; Theft and mugging are the major problems in the city. They also added that it is difficult to go out especially for women to move freely with their mobile phones and jewelries. The action by the thieves who snatch their spur and run in unprecedented speed made their confidence and freedom in their neighborhood fall under threat.The police officers participated in the study as potential informants agreed that theft, robbery and group bullying have threatened the public to develop sense of insecurity.

In Addis Ababa city community policingpeace building efforts are widely threatened and challenged by anti-social problems.As Milen2009, points out though antisocial behavior is sensitive to context and the perception of the public regarding the deviance status of an act required to genuinely declaring anti-social behavior existence, it is a problem that has a day-to-day impact on residents, neighbors andcommunities. Accordingly, harassment against women, yelling and disturbing by drunken, conflict between husband and wife, insulting with neighbors or with siblings and other form of domestic disturbance were apparent in most of the area, generalized as companionship to cause anti-social behaviors as most of the respondents and discussants exposed. In addition, a group of youngsters who chew chat, smoke cigarette and use different alcoholic drugs at different juncture in their turf were also declared as common anti-social behaviors; a behavior doomed as unethical for any passerby. Group fighting between youngsters of different kebelles of Addis Ababa city is one of the most common practices of anti-social behaviors. As the data obtained both from the FDG participants as well as respondents shows that currently in Addis Ababa city it's becoming a habitual act to observe a group of youngsters when they fight each other by group.

There is evidence of the community policing in successfully handling anti-social behavior especially youth boys group and kebelle based conflicts in the city. One such initiative was creating working groups or committees to oversee and address such kinds of sensitive issues.The community policing have different committee, development, security advisory committee, security and elder's council. The main responsibility of elder's council is giving social judgment, advising youths and resolving conflict. For instance, according to six month, 2018 report of Addis Ababa city police office, in Addis Ababa city out of 83 cases 42 cases solved by community policing dispute resolution mechanism   without applying formal laws and procedures. Furthermore, the respondents from community   policing officers and the local communities revealed that elder's council with the responsibility of advising youths and resolving conflict solved several cases like family conflict between husband and wife, youth boys group and kebelle based conflicts. But related with this issue lack of knowledge regarding the law by members of elders is the major problem raised by the respondents and this leads for the conflicts to have a chance take place again.

One of the features of democratic government is community policing which implies sovereignty of the people enshrined under the FDRE constitution which is guaranteed under the FDREconstitution. It basically insists the local community to work closely with the security sectors and officers to address conflicts and building one's own local peace. With regard to the level of community participation in achieving objectives and philosophies of community policing as it is obtained from the FGD only few individuals participating specifically females more participating than males in community policing in their localities.

Moreover, most of the respondents from community policing officers and the local communities explained that level of participation of thecommunity ispoor especially young boys they do not want participating in the practice and usually they need payment or they need some benefit and others attached community policing with government political agenda and due to current political situation and lack of good governance the people highly hate the government including police, even some people ostracize member of local community who are involving in community policing and conflict resolutions activities in Addis Ababa city. Due to lack of public trust, specifically after the 2016/2017 (2008 E.C) political unrest in the city, community policing practices in fighting crimes, resolving conflicts and building the peace of the city is becoming weak.

To effectively implement the community policing values and philosophies, officers assigned to lead the community policing practice should be equipped with skills of dispute resolution mechanisms, peace building and related issues. These are vital skills for police officers to help the work hand in hand and mobilize the resources and effectively achieve the goals of community policing. However, most community policing officers deployed or assigned as a community policing officer without adequate training or any training. Even if, some of they have been taken few days training that is not enough for effectively mobilize the community. Thus, one challenge of the community policing is lack of required knowledge and skill on the community policing officers. This may affect negatively the security of the community. The central idea of community policing gives community policing officers the authority to solve problems and make operational decisions suitable to the community. However, without skill and knowledge how they can give valid decision in resolving conflicts and preserve the peace and stability of the city.

Urban areas in most countries around the world present some particular challenges for policing in response to high a population density. These situations can pose serious problems for the police, where crowds can grow beyond the number of available police officers, and become unmanageable and unpredictable (UNDOC 2013). Thus, increasing police members and their availability at different area is a foregone conclusion so to prevent crime and violence. Related with this, as the data obtained from the respondents revealed that police personnel's are now being available at different area of the city. Especially after the 2016/2017 (2008 E.C) political unrest the number of police officers that conduct patrol surveillance in the city increases.The provision of regular foot patrols which is almost double in the city after the political unrest in the city is now contributing for the regular existence of police officers in the street.

6.   Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings of this study the following major conclusions are made in line with the

objectives of the article. The article primarily initiated to assess the challenges and prospects of community policing in conflict resolution and peace building in Addis Ababa city. Attempts were made to identify challenges and prospects of community policing. Before the introduction of community policing crime of robbery, theft, mugging, snatching, rape, and violence were most predominantly happen in the city. But after the city practiced community policing most crimes reduced. But due to lack of public trust, specifically after the 2016/2017 political unrest in the city, community policing practices in fighting crimes, resolving conflicts and building the peace of the city is becoming weak.

This is considered as one of the major challenge of community policing in conflict resolution and peace building in Addis Ababa city. Moreover, lack of knowledge of peace committees which are established under community policing different centers regarding resolution of conflict is the major problem raised by the respondents and this leads for the conflicts to have a chance take place again. Due to this, some conflicts gain the chance to de-escalate to violence.

However, the community policing centers and patrolling of the city shows increment. For instance, in most parts of the city community policing centers exist and serve the community. This enhances community's access to police service and enhance the peace and stability of the city.

7. References

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