

# **NEW AVENUES FOR PLANNING PRACTICE IN NIGERIA**

**EDITED BY**

**LAYI EGUNJOBI  
KABIR YARI  
OPUENEBO OWEI**



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## Potentials of the Professional Urban and Regional Planners in the Nigeria Police Service

Wole Morenikeji, A.M. Jinadu, E.T. Umaru  
and L.M. Sanni

### 9.1 Introduction

Urban security has become a major concern both in the developed and developing countries in the wake of the rising urban terrorism and violence. As urbanization is increasing in scale so also is urban crime and the increasing need for policing. This chapter looks at the functions of the police, the concept of urban planning and how the planning profession can collaborate with the police to create safer cities.

### 9.2 The Functions of the Nigeria Police Force

The Police Act 23 of 1979 spells out the general duties of the police. These duties include prevention and detection of crime,

the apprehension of offenders and the preservation of law and order. Other duties include the protection of lives and property and the due enforcement of all laws and regulations with which they are duly charged.

Section 59 sub-sections 5 and 6 also charge the police with the control and regulation of, or the enforcement of the law relating to, road traffic. Traffic wardens are required under this act to deal, among others, with the following:

- (a) general control and direction of motor traffic on the highway;
- (b) assisting pedestrians to cross the road; and
- (c) controlling vehicles stopping or parking in unauthorised places

From the foregoing, it is very easy to see the connection between the functions of the police and urban planning. The next sections will discuss the concept of planning and major activities of planners, demonstrate how planning skills have been and can be brought to bear on police functions.

### **9.3 The Concept of Planning**

The far-reaching utility and significance of planning and its related activities have been severally expressed in the literature. Agbola and Oladoja (2001) assert that, without planning, the world would not have experienced civilization. Planning is, therefore, charting the course of an action before it occurs. It is predetermining beneficial activities based on established facts long before they are implemented. Planning, has been given a wide range of meanings and interpretations and has become

increasingly more dynamic in recent times. Planning is essentially about making a choice among differing options about future activities and deploying necessary resources for their implementation (Agbola and Oladoja, 2001). Faludi (1973) conceptualizes planning as the application of the scientific method to policy making with a view to increasing the validity of policies in terms of the present and anticipated future of the environment.

Planning is a systematic approach to decision-making and it takes place at different scales and levels, including individual, group and even societal levels. It is also futuristic. Although it is a more general term, it has been used in connection with various fields of knowledge and human activities, including physical planning, economic planning, purposeful planning, innovative planning and strategic planning (Agbola and Oladoja, 2001).

One of the most well-known fields or genres of planning is physical planning, which is also known and called by different names, including urban planning, urban and regional planning, land-use planning and town planning. Urban planning is both a field of knowledge and an activity domain. One of the most comprehensive and popular definitions of urban planning is offered by Keeble (1969), as an activity concerned with the spatial ordering of land-use both in the rural and urban areas for the purpose of creating functionally efficient and aesthetically pleasing physical environment for living, working, circulation and recreation. Urban planning is the art and science of ordering the use of land and siting of building and communication routes



so as to secure maximum practicable degree of economy, convenience and beauty.

Adedibu (1995), in amplifying Losch's earlier definition, describes, urban planning as the art and science concerned with the balanced opportunities between various sections of the population, and the space available so as to match suitable locations with the right events. However, as a result of its dynamic nature, urban planning has since gone beyond the limits expressed by the likes of Kebble, Losch and Adedibu. For instance, Davidoff and Reiner (1965) view planning as a set of procedures undertaken in making choices among alternatives and in determining the future course of action. This definition suggests that planning is not only scientific and methodical, but is also crucial to both the present and future conditions of human's environment.

In a more wider perspective, Patton and Reed (1988) define urban and regional planning as a discipline and profession concerned with forces that influence the quality of life from the neighbourhood down to the region, state and nation, employing systematic and creative approaches to address and resolve social, economic and physical problems of the neighbourhoods, localities, cities and the larger regions.

#### **9.4 Major Activities Undertaken by Urban and Regional Planners**

In recent times, particularly as a result of the unprecedented pattern of urbanization and high population growth rates and

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their associated challenges, the training and education received by professional urban and regional planners have been so broadened that the profession has been tagged eclectic. Contemporary urban planners, although still very much concerned with plan making at different scales and levels, are increasingly becoming crucial players in evolving and implementing policies related to several aspects of man's living conditions and his environment. They are concerned with addressing such issues as poverty, rural development planning, urban governance in all its ramifications, particularly urban land-use planning and management, energy use and conservation, pollution control, natural resource management, infrastructural facilities provision planning and siting, housing development and transportation planning and management. The lot now falls more on urban planners to fashion innovative ways of making the cities more liveable and comfort zones for work, leisure and recreation. As a result of the skills and training received by contemporary urban planners, they can be engaged to work at different levels of public service, including the military and paramilitary organizations, like the Police, Immigration and Customs.

Apart from the relevance of the professional urban planners to different departments of the public service, they are engaged as consultants in matters related to land-use planning and management, project feasibility studies, urban waste management and environmental impact assessment. In subsequent sections, attempt will be made to highlight more on

the capabilities of the urban planners, particularly those that can be deployed to the services of the police in Nigeria and other parts of the world.

### **9.5 Urbanization, Crime and Crime Management**

The large size of urban populations and the rapid rates at which many urban areas are growing in several developing countries, including Nigeria, have both combined to create a number of socio-economic, environmental and physical challenges (Mover, 2006; Hove et al., 2013). One of these is increased crime occurrence, which is becoming more violent, and the sophistication of criminals and weapons used (Agbola, 2004; Fajemirokun et al., 2006; Baker, 2012; Ekoja and Adole, 2008; Baker, 2012). Studies (Doran and Lees, 2005; Bernasco and Elffers, 2010; Alemika, 2013; International Association of Crime Analysts, 2013; Igbo, 2015; Sanni, 2017) have established that the pattern of crime occurrence varies from one country to another and between different parts of the same country and across different neighbourhoods of the same city. Some neighbourhoods of the cities in many countries, both in developed and developing countries have been identified to experience more crimes than the others, particularly as a result of the socio-economic characteristics of residents, pattern of housing development and the existence of other crime factors (Jinadu et al., 2012; Sanni, 2017). While some are notorious for armed robbery, mugging, illicit drug use and trade, others are

hotbeds of prostitution, cultism, automobile theft and kidnapping, amongst others.

In spite of several measures undertaken by government at different levels crime is still relatively high in Nigeria and is becoming more violent in some instances. The performance of the police statutorily saddled with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the country has also been described as less than satisfactory in that respect. The situation has created a pervasive fear of crime and sense of insecurity among the citizenry to such extent that many households and neighbourhoods are beginning to adapt the design of their houses to further secure themselves and their families. However, it is believed that the police can do much better than it is currently doing if the services of the right professionals, including urban planners, are engaged.

#### **9.6 Potential Areas of Engagement of Urban Planners in the Police Service**

The core mandate of the police in any country is maintenance of law and order and, by extension, crime prevention and management. With increase in urban crime and criminality over the years, policing has also become more challenging, sophisticated and technology-driven.

As noted by Qui (2016), GIS can be integrated with the CCTV system, as is being operated by the Mauritius Police. Such system supports locating the cameras and

viewing the live images of the specific cameras on top of the map (see Plates 9.1 and 9.2). Furthermore, the system is being used to monitor the real-time locations of the on-duty police units, which are equipped with GPS terminals so that the police officers can make quicker and smarter commands in case of emergencies.



**Plate 9.1:** Integration of GIS with CCTV Cameras as Operated by the Mauritius Police

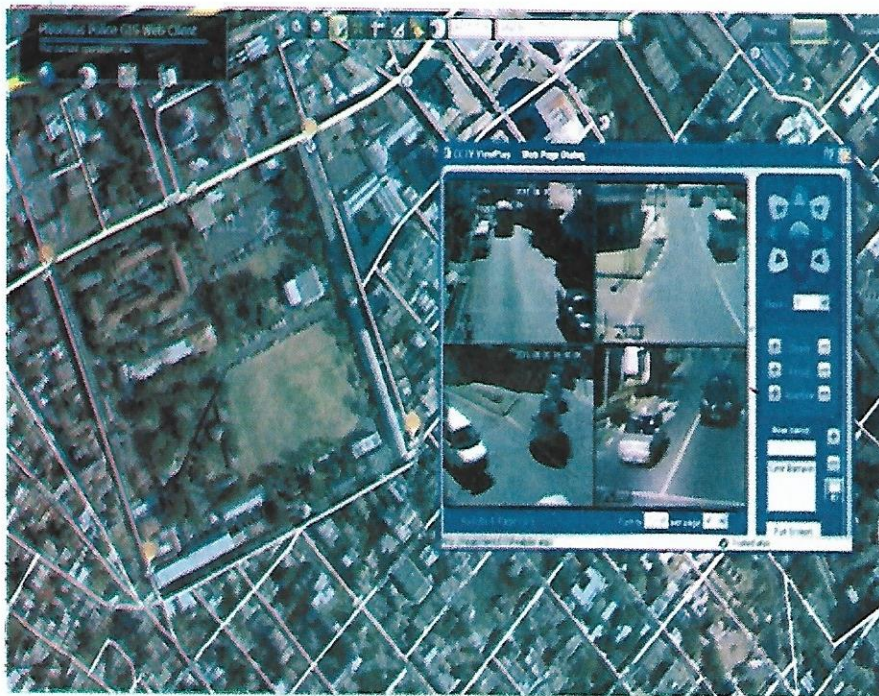


Plate 9.2: Single Window Multi-image Monitoring

In the case of Mauritius, Qui (2016) claims that p-related data can be visualized on map via thematic maps (Figure 9.1) so as to help investigators to identify the trends and the variations of crimes, or evaluate the performance of different police stations.

A similar work done with the Nigeria Police Force in Minna, Nigeria by Jinadu, Morenikeji, et al., (2012) is reproduced in Figure 9.2.

*Potential of the Professional Urban and Regional Planners in the Nigeria Police Service*

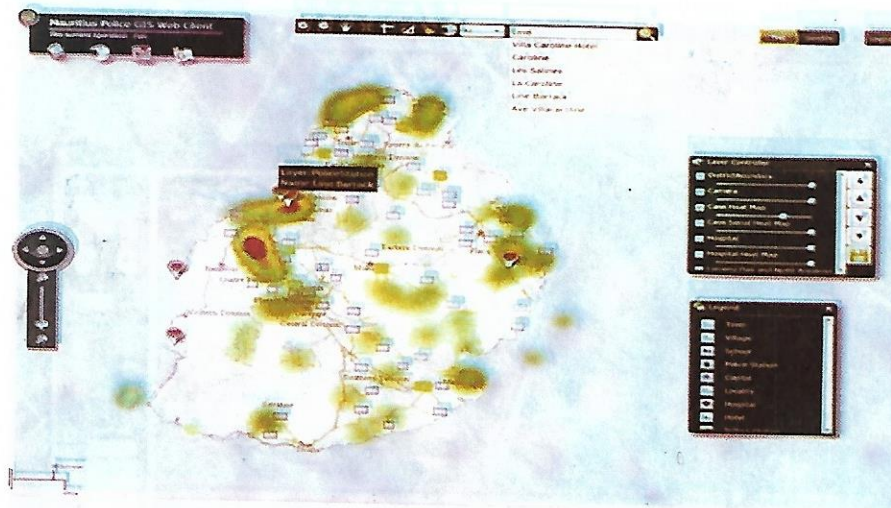


Figure 9.1: Heat Map of the different crime density of the whole Mauritius Island

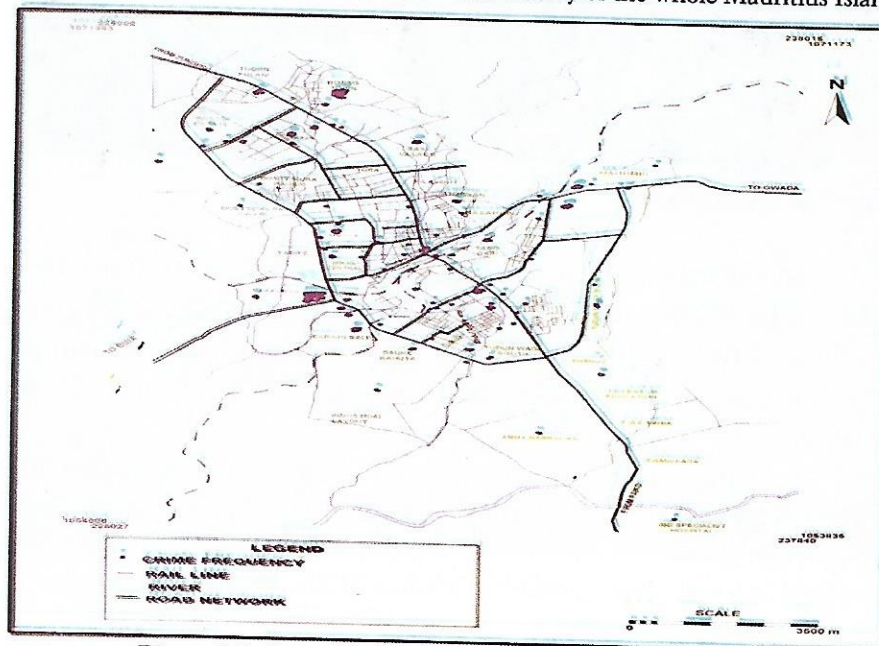


Figure 9.2: Spatial Distribution of Crime in Minna (2001-2011)

In the new and emerging form of policing required to address today's security challenges, professional urban and regional planners can play a number of crucial roles and responsibilities in the police service in the following areas:

#### **9.6.1 Crime Prevention and Risk Minimization**

The UN-Habitat (2007) has identified that between 10 to 15 per cent of crimes have environmental design and management components. As a result, urban planners with appropriate knowledge of urban land-use and its dynamics, particularly in relation to urban neighbourhood layouts, housing density and general pattern of physical development, can be engaged to design neighbourhood-specific crime-prevention strategies. In addition, armed with relevant data about neighbourhoods' socio-economic, housing and environmental characteristics, urban planners are better placed to identify the possible crime risks in the various neighbourhoods and evolve or design appropriate measures to minimize same. This is particularly necessary as the police are now beginning to partner local communities in addressing identified crime risks in their various neighbourhoods.

#### **9.6.2 Crime Hotspot Identification and Mapping**

Studies have shown that, in many urban areas of both the developed and developing countries, there are enclaves of crime and criminal activities (Paynich and Hill, 2010; International Association of Crime Analysts, 2013). In many cases, these are



stressful and disadvantaged neighbourhoods, particularly with high concentration of poverty and unemployment (Zhang and Peterson, 2007). These are often cases poorly developed urban neighbourhoods with poor housing conditions and shortage of relevant infrastructural facilities inhabited mostly by the poor segment of society. As part of crime-prevention and crime-management strategies, many police units are expected to identify such crime hotbeds within their operational jurisdictions. Urban planners are known to have developed the right expertise in using geospatial techniques, such as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and remote sensing techniques, in identifying such crime hotspots and engaging in mapping such areas.

The GIS is a system of hardware, software and data organizational structure for collecting, storing, manipulating and spatially analysing geo-referenced data and displaying information from these processes (Brookman-Amisshah et al., 2014). Crime mapping is generally understood to mean the processes of conducting spatial analysis of crime incidences of an area based on aggregated crime data obtained over a period of time (Ahmadi, 2003; Ratcliffe, 2010). Armed with these capabilities which can be deployed in crime prevention and management, urban planners have become increasingly relevant to modern policing.

### **9.6.3 Surveillance and Patrol Route Planning**

Crucial to modern policing and crime prevention and management is surveillance and intelligence gathering. Based on the criminal records of specific neighbourhoods gathered

over the years, the urban planners engaged by the police, with their extensive knowledge of urban spatial development dynamics, are better placed to participate in gathering sufficient intelligence information about various neighbourhoods of the cities. This is because urban planners are trained in the art of public engagement and could deploy the principles of public participation in planning to sufficiently interact with various stakeholders of the communities about security challenges being faced in their areas.

Police patrols of neighbourhoods under their various jurisdictions at regular intervals for prompt intervention in cases of security threats have also become an acceptable method of modern policing. Therefore, given the perennial traffic usually associated with many urban areas, it is essential that such patrols be planned in advance in order to maximize resources. Urban planners, with knowledge of transport and traffic planning and management would therefore, be relevant in designing and planning the route system for effective patrol system if engaged in the police service.

#### **9.6.4 Tracking and Monitoring of Criminal Elements**

It is an established fact that criminal elements do not give up on their nefarious activities easily even after several arrests and prosecution. It has, therefore, become the norm in modern policing to continuously track the movements and activities of known criminal elements and gangs. With the use of modern GIS technology devised for movement tracking and for which the urban planners is now trained, such planners engaged in the

relevant police department or unit would be sufficiently placed to use the technology to track and monitor the activities of known criminals and, by so doing, help prevent crime long before it occurs.

#### **9.6.5 Planning and Siting of New Police Formations**

With the high population growth rates and rapid expansion of the cities in Nigeria, there is a continuous need to establish new police posts and formations across the country to police new neighbourhoods and districts. The professional urban planners, if engaged by the police service would be able to deploy their skills of site selection and planning and knowledge of the principles guiding facility provision to advise on appropriate sites for such. Planners' understanding of the principles guiding centrality and equitable location of facilities is an asset the police require in establishing new units to derive maximum benefits from such units.

#### **9.6.6 Barracks Development Planning**

In the same fashion as the requirement for efficient location of new police units is the need to effectively plan for the housing need of officers and men of the police service. Many of the existing police barracks across the country have become eyesores and embarrassment to the police service because of their deplorable conditions and poor locations. Urban planners, particularly those grounded in housing development planning, if engaged in the relevant department of the police service, would not only guide in choosing the appropriate locations for

such new barracks but would also evolve the right designs as well as put in place a workable plan for their periodic maintenance and revitalization of existing ones. The current poor state of many police barracks across the country underscores the need for urgent engagement of urban planners in the police service. If well housed, the officers and men of the police would earn their respect from members of the public, and appropriate housing environment would also improve on their productivity.

#### **9.6.7 Urban Traffic Planning and Management**

The police have a specialized unit responsible for traffic control and management. There is doubt if this department has lived up to its billing over the years with the chaotic traffic situations in many towns and cities across the country. The engagement of urban planners, especially those with specialization in transportation and urban traffic planning and management, will revitalize this department and members of the public will benefit maximally. The efficiency which the urban planners will enthrone in such department will also make many of the cities become more functional.

#### **9.6.8 Research and Development**

Police duties and performance across the world thrive on continuous research and development activities undertaken to address emerging challenges. With the right mix of professionals, including urban planners with their multiplicity of skills and capabilities, especially in using modern research methodologies and technologies, such as GIS and remote

sensing, if engaged, would produce a better and result-oriented police service. The urban planners, with their firm understanding of urban development dynamics, have a lot to give to a modern police service in the country, if engaged and given the right ambience to perform in terms of research and development activities.

### **9.7 Conclusion**

The increasing dynamism and relevance of the urban planning profession has been established, particularly in addressing contemporary urban development challenges, including crime and insecurity. Modern professional urban and regional planners can, therefore, fit into any arm of the public service, including the police, with their multiplicity of skills and capabilities, especially at the use of statistical methods and GIS technologies. Therefore, the profession and its practitioners are very much poised to offer cutting-edge strategies and plans to the Nigeria Police to address issues of crime and insecurity in the country.

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