

Partnering for Security: The Role and Imperatives of Local Non-State Actors in Nigeria

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Abstract

Nigeria is a country blessed with natural potentials that can be harnessed for development. Ironically, she is currently confronted by myriads of security challenges that have impeded the march to development. With the challenges overwhelming the state's capacity to provide adequate security for lives, properties and threats to the statehood at large, partnering in the process has, therefore, become a ready alternative. Unfortunately, even with the plethora of legal security agencies, the security challenges have assumed a demographic dimension in the country with peculiarity found in the various regions. In the attempt to discuss succinctly the Local Non-State Actors (LNSAs) as partners in the security management of the country, this paper identified the forms of LNSAs, the propelling reasons that necessitated LNSAs in the Nigerian context, their operational challenges, the emerging security challenges and demographic spread. It concluded that security challenge is widespread in the country with recorded deaths and loss of properties. Therefore, the idea behind LNSAs is a welcome development that deserved encouragement, particularly now that the federal government has risen to the challenge of recognizing community policing in the country. But, more importantly, they should be closely monitored to avoid misuse and abuse.

Keywords: bandits, demography, insurgency, security, vigilante, violence.

Introduction

Emerging security challenges appears to have overwhelmed the law enforcement agencies in Nigeria. Mere police, paramilitary and military presence has not deterred groups from crossing the red line in Nigeria.

Security challenges have become fierce than before with the attendant use of sophisticated weapons. It needs not be emphasized that this had threatened the foundation of the Nigerian state. More importantly, a major responsibility of a responsible government is the provision of security for the lives and properties of its citizens to avoid chaos and create an atmosphere for development to occur. The state occupies and plays a dominant role in society since it monopolizes the legitimate use of physical force. Unfortunately, as the Nigerian experience had shown, trending security challenges such as abduction, armed robbery, banditry, ritual killings, ethnic militias, herdsman-farmers crisis and Boko Haram insurgency, is at the centre stage. Combating the menace had been difficult for the law enforcement agents due to many reasons, which included inadequate equipment and security personnel, the sophistication of criminal activities, difficult terrain, insider collaboration, corruption, beneficiaries of crisis, loss of confidence in the state by security personnel etc. Consequently, citizens and their properties have been left vulnerable while life had become meaningless. Hence, citizens had to devise ways and means of providing security for themselves, their properties and the community at large. Thus, questions concerning the capacity of the state-designed and led security architecture to deal with the above had been raised. The import of the expose is the fragility of the Nigerian state and a possible state failure.

In the light of the above, this paper seeks to find answers to the forms of LNSA, the propelling reasons for LNSA and the operational challenges, emerging security challenges and their demographic spread as well as the imperatives for LNSA. To achieve the above objectives the following research questions were asked: What are the forms of LNSA? What are the propelling reasons that necessitated LNSA? What are the operational challenges? What are the emerging security challenges and demographic spread?

Methodology

The descriptive method was adopted in this paper and data gathered were generated from secondary sources. These sources included textbooks, journals, newspapers, and internet materials. Specifically, the data sourced were mostly on issues of insecurity in Nigeria. Some of the newspapers sampled because of their wide coverage and availability

included The Nation and Punch. However, personal observation also played a fundamental role in strengthening the analysis.

Theoretical Framework

In this paper, the role theory is adopted as the theoretical framework for analysing the contributions of non-state actors as partners in the response to security challenges. It is a theoretical framework that is devoted to the study of behaviour, with emphasis on the role. Through the works of scholars like Mead (1934), Banton (1965), Biddle (1979), and Benes (2011), the theory was popularized. It posits that each social role is a set of rights, duties, expectations, norms and behaviours that a person has to face or fulfil (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index>). Highlights of the propositions of the role theory about social behaviour are as follows: (i) the division of labour in society take the form of the interaction among heterogeneous specialized positions that are called roles. (ii) social roles include appropriate and permitted forms of behaviour, guided by social norms, which are commonly known and hence determine expectations. (iii) roles are occupied by individuals, who are called “actors”. (iv) change conditions can render a social role outdated or illegitimate, in which case social pressures are likely to lead to role change (<http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index>).

The role theory argues that we can draw an analogy between individuals (in society and the state (Ezeani, 2015)). This implies that the roles ascribed to individuals in the society are applied in the explanation of the behaviour of the state (Benes, 2011). Furthermore, Chafetz (1997) argued that actors usually have multiple roles that vary in overall importance (centrality) and according to the situation (context or salience). In lending support to the above, it is argued that an individual or group may play multiple roles simultaneously depending on the situation (Sekhri, 2009). It is however important to note that humans and groups usually maintain a repertoire of roles and identities, so long each provides roles of appropriate behaviour in situations for which they are relevant (March and Olsen, 2004). It is obvious from the analysis above that the roles theory is very relevant in examining the contributions of non-state actors as partners in the response to security challenges in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Protection of lives and properties of citizens remains a major responsibility of government. Therefore, the establishment of several state security outfits is to achieve the objective of providing internal and external security for the country. Thus, combating (in) security challenges in Nigeria has led to the establishment of a number of institutions of state defence and apparatus for combating criminal activities. In the context of this paper, state security actors refer to the plethora of security agencies put in place by the government to provide security. They are the Armed Forces (Army, Navy and Air Force), Police, Directorate of State Services (DSS), National Intelligence Agency (NIA), Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI), Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC), Paramilitary agencies e.g. Immigration, Customs and Prisons. The non-state actors, on the other hand, are different from the state apparatus since they are not put in place by the government. They are often recognized by government security agencies as they provide complementary services in an attempt to provide a secured environment for citizens to go about their business. Among the non-state actors are local non-state actors who are domicile in their respective communities.

Security is a multi-dimensional concept. It has various meanings such as environmental, human, national, social, food, military and homeland security. This paper, however, focuses on environmental and human security. Environmental security refers to the protection of the environment and ecosystem, while human security refers to the protection of lives and properties. Counterinsurgency refers to actions, measures designed and implemented to curtail insurgency.

Forms and Operational Challenges of Local Non-State Actors

Forms

The following local groups have emerged and served as partners in policing the neighbourhood to help curb criminal activities.

Vigilante: This is a form of community-based policing method. In Spanish and Portuguese, vigilante means watchman. It is self-appointed civilians or organizations acting in a law enforcement capacity often without legal authority (Wiki, 2019a). It is not a recent idea as it

predates colonialism in Nigeria. In local communities, an arrangement is put in place whereby a group of persons were chosen to guard or police the communities/villages both day and night. They undertake law enforcement in their respective communities and have since acted in collaboration with the Police. They use local intelligence operations in collaboration with security agencies.

Anti-cult Group: This group is often made up of renounced cultists who work in conjunction with the Police to apprehend known cultists and curb cult-related activities in areas where they are prevalent. They are mostly found in the university environment because this is where a high number of the youth population, who are mostly prone to becoming members are domiciled.

Hunters group: These are mostly made up of farmers and hunters. They help to comb forests and are very familiar with their respective terrain. They have served in some cases as night guards who sometimes helped in tracking down kidnappers mostly in the bush. Common to this group is that members of the respective groups were recruited from local communities who could also fortify themselves with charms.

Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF): This is a kind of community policing that encourage partnership between the Joint Task Force and the local communities in providing security. It emerged as a community effort and later as a joint effort with security forces to provide security. CJTF is a loose group formed in Maiduguri Nigeria in the heat of the Boko Haram insurgency. It played a collaborative role with security agencies to help oust Boko Haram Islamist fighters from the city (Wiki, 2019b). Civilians incorporated into the force are locally selected, made to possess guns and they reside in the communities. The advantage is that members of the various guards were well known in the communities and could volunteer information that can lead to crack down on acts of criminality mostly in the North East region. Amotekun, which is a security arrangement put in place by the South West Governors as part of the Development Agenda for Western Nigeria (DAWN), may well fall into this category. It incorporates local vigilantes, hunters, Agbekoyas, and Oodua People's Congress (OPC). The essence is to gather intelligence and partner/collaborate with state actors in securing the region.

Oodua People's Congress (OPC): This group was formed in 1994 as a militant arm of Afenifere – a pan Yoruba group. Initially, the group was at the forefront of protesting the annulment of the June 12, 1993, Presidential election. Its goal was basically the protection of Yoruba interests. Membership was opened to everybody that was Yoruba by origin. Though the OPC was formed to primarily protect, champion and defend the right of every Yoruba person, it has since acted and existed as a vigilante group (Akpan, 2006; Agweda, 2007) to secure the lives and properties of persons in the Yoruba enclaves.

Finally, ***Neighbourhood Watch*** is a way of reducing crime by organizing people who live in an area to watch each other and properties and tell the police about possible crimes and criminals. They are mostly devoted to crime and vandalism reportage and prevention within the neighbourhood. Besides, the fact that they complement the security agencies effort in combating crimes, it also aims at bringing people together to make their environment and community safe (Wiki, 2019c). The Lagos State Neighbourhood Watch, Rivers State Neighbourhood Watch and Zamfara State Volunteer Groups Association put together by the respective state governments are major examples.

It should be noted that the above represents self-help attempts by communities to respond to their safety threats occasioned by the overwhelming prevalence of crimes and criminal activities in Nigeria, coupled with the inability and inadequacies of the legal agencies in combating security challenges.

Operational Challenges

There are known operational challenges in allowing these outfits to exist side by side with the legal security agencies. For example, politics have affected the operational performance of LNSA. Through government policies and programmes, their activities are regulated. Their independence from the existing political structure is, therefore, not guaranteed. Thus, they are compromised in the discharge of their duties. There is no gainsaying the fact that sitting governments usually recruit members of the outfits mostly from among loyal party members. In certain cases, these outfits have been hijacked by politicians or the power elites and used as an instrument of political vendetta. In a bid to regulate their activities, they were deployed to advance the cause of their

paymasters, used to intimidate and oppress political opponents as well as silence opposition in democracies. The implication is the compromise of the original intention.

Secondly, there is the unintended consequence of empowerment against the state. This means taking up arms against the same state that they were expected to protect. This perhaps lends credence to the emergence of Boko Haram in the North East and militants in the South-South as groups that started small but later transformed into a terrorist and militant group, respectively against the state, thus defeating the original intention.

It has also served as a shield for criminal elements in society. Certain members of these groups have used the platform as cover for their nefarious activities. Identifying with the platform saved them from prosecution, more so when those recruited were not subjected to the rigorous policing recruitment process. Where they exist, some have deviated from their objectives and were used for settlement of disputes, guards to criminal elements and corrupt politicians in the society, available to those that can pay their bills during ceremonies etc. With endemic corruption in society, LNSAs are not spared. Societal influence has made them abandon and deviate from set targets, carry out illegal activities, perpetrate acts of criminality, and escort dubious economic saboteurs and elites.

Overzealousness of some members of these groups is another major challenge. There have been reported cases of violations as some members deployed excessive use of intimidation, violence and extrajudicial killings of innocent citizens under the flimsiest excuse. Suspects have been severally manhandled with severe injuries left behind. In this circumstance, citizens' rights are violated.

Moreover, the vulnerability of group members is yet another challenge for LNSAs. They are endangered and become immediate unwilling victims of the process without insurance cover. Some members have been attacked while others have lost their lives in a crossfire with criminal elements. This vulnerability is often coupled with inadequate security infrastructure. For example, weapons of the criminal elements oftentimes were more sophisticated than that of group members, thus exposing them to higher and superior firepower.

Inter-agency rivalries are also part of the operational challenge of the LNSAs. The argument regarding whose responsibility it is to provide security has jettisoned the gains of cooperation and collaboration. Arguments of insufficient training and non-identification with members have made it difficult to form a synergy with other security agencies in providing security. The reluctance of the regular government security actors to be incorporated in the Amotekun project finds an explanation in the above.

Shortage of funds, personnel and other logistics, such as vehicles, communication gadgets, insurance, arms and ammunitions have also created a problem for the effective discharge of their responsibility. The synergy between LNSAs and the security organization requires a lot of funds. The absence of the above has frustrated and incapacitated the exercise.

Finally, the over-centralization of security architecture is such that poses a great challenge. The organizational problem is perhaps one of the greatest obstacles as approvals to carry out certain actions are regulated from the centre and so the bureaucracy can stall legitimate and genuine purposes. The frustration is such that LNSAs must submit to the regular legal security agencies for the final determination or disposal of cases particularly in a situation, where there is a conflict of interest. Considering that in Nigeria, the Police Force renders reactive and not proactive service, where the emphasis is mostly on crime-fighting which mostly involve apprehension and prosecution of criminals, the measurement of their effectiveness is based on the number of arrests and prosecutions that are handled over a given period (Ugwuoke, 2006). In the light of the above, the police system is bound to be isolated from the causes of crimes, from the stakeholders, who could address such problems and from the information required to manage such situations (Conradie, 1999).

The Propelling Reasons for the Emergence of LNSA

Failure of state security apparatus to provide adequate security for citizens (failure of state capacity) is a major propelling factor that has led to the emergence of LNSAs. A major responsibility of the state is the protection of the lives and properties of its citizens. It is no longer in doubt that the Nigerian state security institutions are overwhelmed by the

myriad of criminality in the country. The latest attempt is for the citizens to organize for the preservation of their peace and security through local outfits. The administration of ex-President Olusegun Obasanjo recognized this threat and approved community policing since 1999 and was again echoed, by President Muhammadu Buhari in 2019.

Increase in security challenges such as those posed by Boko Haram insurgency, herdsmen-farmers clashes, kidnapping and abduction, armed banditry, ritual killings, ethnic agitations, militancy in the Niger Delta, vandalism etc have threatened and challenged the state capacity to provide adequate security for the citizens and the country at large.

Again, combating criminal activities requires good knowledge and understanding of the respective terrain. Terrains, such as the very vast Sambisa forest in the North-Eastern Nigeria and the swampy and riverine nature of the Niger Delta in South-South Nigeria respectively are peculiar terrains that demand local network to achieve success. Major successes are recorded with the incorporation of LNSAs in the security architecture. This is further affirmed by the fact that there is strength in joint action and collaboration, particularly with the transnational dimension that many criminal activities have assumed.

The successes recorded in previous attempts by existing LNSAs in other climes have motivated the proliferation of LNSAs in Nigeria. Citizens have discovered that there is a gain in working together for the safety of lives and properties, hence the establishment of new ones.

Over-centralization of security architecture has led to the inability of the state agencies to provide adequate security. This state failure occasioned by the over-centralization of authority is mostly evident in the command structure of the security agencies. Security agencies compromise at certain stages has created room for the escalation of crisis across the country.

It should be recognized at this juncture, however, that the major contributions of the LNSAs were that they have been able to complement the official security system effort in combating crime. In the era of massive youth unemployment, it has served as avenues for the empowerment of youth as many of them that would have been a source of pressure on the state were recruited.

Emerging Security Challenges, Methods, Demographic Spread and Consequences

Without too much emphasis, it is already a known fact that there are serious security challenges in Nigeria. There is Boko Haram terrorism/insurgency in the North East. Their targets are mostly security agencies, Christians and the civilian populace. Their demands are the abolition of western education and the Islamisation of the country. Poverty, extreme indoctrination, failed governance, political intrigues and contradiction are the propelling factors. Though their identities are unknown, there are strong indications that they enjoy local and international sponsorship. Their instruments of operation are mostly sophisticated guns, bombs, explosives and grenades. Killings, bombings, massive use of explosives, hit and run remain their strategy. Government response has been confrontational through the use of the military (Agbebaku, Odion, and Edokpa, 2014). Outfits, such as Operation Lafia Dole, Joint Task Force (JTF) and Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), have been used variously to combat the menace of terrorism in the region.

The herdsmen/farmers clash mostly exist in the North-Central. These clashes are engaged in by farmers and herders whom both struggle for survival. While the herders struggle for grazing land, farmers and communities struggle for farmland. Their instruments of operation are mostly guns, grenades and burnings. The strategy is to attack and counter-attack on cattle herders and communities. The response of government and affected communities has been to use the police, military, hunter groups, youth vanguard, Joint Task Force (JTF) and Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). To further address this issue, Ekiti and Benue States have passed laws banning open grazing and empowered outfits, such as the Benue State Livestock Guards to arrest herders, who continued with open grazing in defiance of the law.

Armed bandits/gangsterism are mostly found in the North-West. Villages and communities are the targets of attack. In recent times, the presence of gold (a natural resource) in commercial quantity and its illegal mining in Zamfara State is linked to the crisis in the North-West. Poverty and extreme indoctrination, as well as control of the illegal mining sites, are propelling factors. The operational units are decentralized. Their identities are known and sponsorship is both by

local and international elites. The instrument of operation are guns, cudgels, explosives, knives while they mostly use massive killings, extortion, harassment, intimidation, acts of violence, hit and run, and fear to control their territory. The response of government towards combating the menace has been military confrontation through such outfit codenamed Operation Puff Adder, Operation Hadarin Daji, and Operation Harbin Kunama 3. In Zamfara State, for example, outfits, such as Joint Task Force (JTF) and Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) have been put together. Also, all forms of mining activities in the state have been suspended by the federal government until further notice.

In the South-South region and, in particular, the Niger Delta, militancy is prevalent. The targets of attack are mostly pipelines, oil installations and security agencies. The demand of the militants is amongst others resource control. Massive underdevelopment, pollution, poverty, exploitation, poor quality of life and degradation of the ecosystem are amongst other reasons that propel militancy. The leadership and operational bases of the militants are decentralized while they enjoy local and international sponsorship. Their instrument of operation is mostly sophisticated guns, bombs, explosives and grenades. Massive killings, vandalisation and blowing up of oil pipelines, installations and destruction/disruption of flow stations have been their strategy. Besides the granting of Amnesty by the government, a military confrontation with the militants through outfits, such as Joint Task Force (JTF) and Operation Python Dance, had also been adopted by the government. In the case of abduction, the instrument of operation is sophisticated guns and the strategy employed is coercion, intimidation, killings and ransom payment. Youth and herders are mostly culpable in this act.

In the South-West, ritual killings, rape and armed robberies are endemic. Children, girls and women are most vulnerable. Vital human parts are required of this vulnerable target to perform rituals. The group operates as a syndicate and the driving force is the quest for riches. Victims are often blindfolded, charmed and intimidated. The identities of the perpetrators, who are mostly youth, are unknown until they are arrested. Individual risk is taken by members of the organized syndicate. The police in collaboration with the youth vanguard,

neighbourhood watch and ethnic militias like Odua Peoples Congress (OPC) have helped in combating this menace.

Finally, in the South-East region, there are myriad security challenges. Ethnic agitations, vandalism, abduction and communal clashes are identified as major security challenges in the region. Ethnic agitation is brought about by the inequity in the operations of the federal structure and the grievance is directed at the federal government. Abduction, vandalisation of pipeline and cable is also prevalent. Attacks are often directed at the elites, security agencies and oil installations. Poverty and the quest for riches remains the motivating factor for the menace of abduction and vandalism in this region and the youth are mostly involved. They operate as a syndicate, often hiding their identities until they are arrested. Guns, explosives and bombs are mostly used in their operation. While abducted victims are required to pay a ransom, intimidation and killings are used in other cases. In the same vein, communal clashes are notable features of this region. Such clashes may be over land ownership, boundary adjustment or presence of natural resources. Influential local politicians and businessmen are sponsors. Government response has been through the use of the military, such as Operation Python Dance and Joint Task Force (JTF).

However, the consequences of the aforementioned security challenges are multi-faceted. The destructive nature of violence anywhere constitutes a severe threat to socio-economic and sustainable development. The impact includes loss of lives and properties, battered international image, loss of revenue, the proliferation of arms and deadly weapons, fresh challenges for security operatives, increased security budgets, the problem of integration, and discourages investments/ investors. It can severely constrain development endeavours by destroying infrastructures, interrupting production processes and diverting resources from productive uses (Agbebaku, Odion and Edokpa, 2014). Generally, the legacy of prolonged security challenges in Nigeria has partly accounted for the crisis of underdevelopment in the country through disarticulation of the development process. It has been devastating and consequential to the emergence of a truly stable polity and society. Violence, conflicts and instability do not only destroy the very foundation of development, it is difficult to mobilize structures and resources in support of development

under the aforementioned condition as evidenced by Bhagwati (1995). It has also encouraged the recruitment of child soldiers, severe violence against children and women and the dislocation of family units. Furthermore, the educational development of the child, which has the potentials of impacting future development, is hampered.

The Imperatives of LNSAs in Nigeria Security Architecture

Apart from the propelling factors for the emergence of LNSAs and the operational challenges, strong advocacy is required for their sustenance and effectiveness. In a democratic environment, such as practised in Nigeria, a decentralized system that allows the citizens to participate in combating security challenges is necessary. The advantage of involving the citizens in a collaborative arrangement with the legal security agencies for the provision of security cannot be overemphasized. Leaving this vital aspect of security management for government institutions alone leaves the citizens endangered as experience has shown in Nigeria. Thus, in an environment, where there are spontaneous attacks by invaders, citizens must necessarily be involved in arranging for the protection and safety of the environment through the formation of synergy. Besides the above, there is strength in joint action and collaboration in providing homeland security and securing government installations. There is strength in unity and a gain in working together, as shared information, responsibility and collaboration stands to yield more results. Increased interdependence of this nature is brought about by the enormity of the security challenge and disparity in resources available to deal with a common problem.

The complementary role played by these LNSAs makes it imperative and is worth emulating. The Harmonized Vigilante Groups, such as hunters group, the Agbekoyas and OPC in Yoruba land are combing South West forests in a bid to help the formal security arrangement curb the nefarious activities of militia Fulani herders and kidnapers. Barely 24 hours after Dayo, the son of a former Minister of Health, was kidnapped at his farm located at Iroko near Fiditi in Afijio Local Government Area of Oyo State, the workers raised alarm which alerted the villagers. The local hunters immediately mobilized and went after the kidnapers and succeeded in recovering the car used, though Dayo and the kidnapers were not immediately found. A similar

incident occurred in Ikpeshi, Akoko Edo in Edo State, where a Catholic Reverend Father Agabi was kidnapped along Auchi-Igarra Road. Immediately the information got to the villagers, the local hunters mobilized to comb the bush. Fortunately, an encounter that led to the exchange of firearms between the duo created an avenue for the abducted priest to escape. A family of five returning from a burial ceremony and abducted at Egoro-Naoka road by suspected Fulani herders were rescued by local vigilante/hunters in Ekpoma, Edo State who immediately formed a synergy among various groups at Uhiele, Urohi, Egor-Naoka and moved into the forest. In the ensuing gun battle, one of the abductors was shot dead while others fled leaving behind the abductees. In Oyo State, OPC helped in smashing a gang of four that constantly terrorized the Ile-Ife-Ibadan road and residents of Ikire (Bamigbola, 2019).

The argument here is that, even with the plethora of legal security agencies, it is obvious that adequate security is still elusive in the country. This conclusion is occasioned by the myriad of security challenges and its demographic spread that daily confronts the country. Deduced from the above is the possibility of the inadequacy of competent security personnel and equipment to combat the enormous threat, which has led to the failure of state capacity. Therefore, partnership with LNSAs is required to complement the efforts of the established institutions. Also, to effectively combat security challenges in the various regions, it would require knowledge and understanding of the local terrain. This is where the LNSAs are handy as they are mostly domiciled in the communities and are familiar with the terrains, and topography. In this direction, the Northern Governors Forum (NGF) had set up a committee to engage local vigilantes and community watch groups on intelligence gathering, rapid response and sustained surveillance in the region (Hassan, 2020).

Furthermore, the need to decentralize the operation of a formal security network lends credence to this advocacy. Earlier recognized is that the organizational arrangement of the regular security agencies is problematic and cumbersome. A system where command flows from the top to bottom is both time-wasting and susceptible to corruption. Thus, it slows down the rate of success. LNSAs are domiciled in local

communities and are available for quick response in terms of crime prevention, control and combat.

Conclusion

Conclusively, Nigeria is at a crossroad in terms of effectively dealing with security challenges. Apart from the trend of a rising crime wave which often includes the killing of innocent citizens, more worrisome is the new scenes of public disorder which has increasingly necessitated the use of armed response, especially around the North-West region, where there is the prevalence of armed bandits.

With the seeming decline in the public support for the state structured security system occasioned by corruption, ineffectiveness and loss of confidence, it is obvious that citizens have relied more on ad hoc community packaged arrangements as identified above for the safety of lives, properties and their communities. Therefore, this arrangement should be sustained and recognized by the government, particularly at the local level, more so when citizens have confidence in them and they are domiciled in the communities. Regular training that dwells on civility is also recommended as it will help address the twin problems of arrogance and overzealousness.

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