COMMUNITY POLICING, IMPROVED SECURITY AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA, 2014 – 2023.

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Abstract

Crime rate and insecurity in Nigeria general and Anambra state in particular is a serious challenge to the security of lives and properties of the citizens as well as the progressive transformation of the state socially and economically despite the availability of the formal or regular police to take care of the challenges. The work examined community policing, improved security and public safety in Anambra state from 2014 – 2023. The basic objective of the study was to seek for ways of improving the services of community policing for enhanced security and public safety in Anambra state. The study employed both primary and secondary data in effort to get an indepth insight into the phenomenon under investigation. The primary data were generated through responses to a structured questionnaire instrument. Secondary data were generated from books, articles, periodicals and journals. Simple percentages were used in the analysis of data retrieved from primary sources while qualitative method of analysis was employed in the analysis gotten through secondary sources. The study employed George J. Thompson's Gap theory as its theoretical framework. The study found out that improved salaries to the security outfits personnel, effective training and re-training of the security outfits members, provision of adequate modern security materials and constant monitoring of the activities of the community policing outfits were very necessary in bringing about of improved security and enhancement of public safety in the communities in particular and Anambra state in general. Based on these findings, the study recommended constant training and retraining of the personnel of the community policing

outfits will make them to always have an edge over the criminals for enhanced performance in crime management and public safety.

Introduction

Community policing is not new to communities in Nigeria because before the British conquest and colonization of Nigeria and enthronement of regular police, different communities and tribes that make up Nigeria had different traditional methods of policing themselves (Aniche, 2018). World over, community policing as a process of ensuring effective societal security is not a new phenomenon but a continuation of conscious efforts put in place by the community concerned for the continued socio-economic growth and development of the community and its inhabitants. It is democracy in action as it gives room for active participation of local communities, civic and business leaders, public and private agencies, residents, churches, schools and hospitals in bringing about a secure society by focusing on all who share concern for the welfare of the neighbourhood (Kelling and Mark, 1988). Thus, the aim of community policing is the bringing about of effective crime management in the community (Ifedigbo, 2014).

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is one of the coercive instruments of compulsion the Nigeria state uses to enforce its laws for internal security maintenance in the country. According to section 214 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended, the police force is vested with the responsibility of internal security inorder to safeguard and guarantee the security of lives and properties of the citizens. Ironically, the Nigeria police force is facing many challenges ranging from negative public image, corruption, low morale as a result of low funding, lack of adequate equipment to rapidly changing social values, which tend to encourage increase in crime rates (Bassey, 2019). According to Nwangwuma (2000), the Nigeria police force is a corrupt, ineffective and weak organization which has over the years failed in the performance of its constitutional and legitimate duties of protecting the lives, properties and business of the citizens as well as prompt prosecution of offenders. The outcome of this ineffectiveness most often makes the citizens to be skeptical of the police and thus adopt "Self-help measures" or take laws into their hands. Some of the measures taken by some citizens or communities to boost their safety according to Chukwuma (2022), include high walled fences, private security outfits employment in their compounds, gated streets and at the community level, the formation of community vigilante groups to watch over the community. Collaborating the above, Ifedigbo (2014), opined that there is a great defect in the structural arrangement of the Nigeria regular police as an institution for internal/domestic crime management (control and prevention) and this has impacted negatively on its ability to effect and ensure national security which is the ability of a state to advance its national

interests and its manifestations in the local environment, contain instability, control and manage crime and criminal tendencies, eliminate corruption and improve the welfare and quality of life of the citizens (Obasanjo, 2014).

Nigeria Police Force despite its huge size has not resulted to a corresponding balance in the traditional functions of the police which according to Ezemuaku (2013), is the maintenance of internal security, order, peace among the citizens and the protection of lives and properties of the citizens. Continuing, Ezemuaku(2013), opined that most Nigeria police personnel have been used by the state and financially rich individuals for negative purposes which include amongst others, the oppression, repression and terrorization of the very citizens they are constitutionally and legally mandated to protect. Against this backdrop, he concluded that Nigeria police force is an agent of the ruling class and the financially wealthy men for the purpose of suppressing the less privilege and the activities of civil society organizations. Rather than regular police been the solution to the security challenges bedeviling the country, it has compounded and perpetuated them. According to Bassey (2019), the Nigeria police have over the years become an oppressive instrument used by the state and the rich individuals to promote selfish interests. As a result, there exists lack of trust of the citizens in the regular police personnel as an institution established by the state for crime management in the state. As the relationship between the people, community and the police wanes, they become separated from one another thereby creating, and perpetuating the mentality of "We versus them" feelings (Ferragi, 2010). For most members of the community, their perception of the police personnel is one that views the police as an institution established by the state to make life difficult for the less privileged ones in the society (Feragi, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

The Nigeria Police Force (NPF) is the statutory body responsible for the preservation of internal law and order as well as protection of the citizens in the cause of exercise of their legal rights within the Nigeria state (1999 Constitution of Nigeria as amended section 214). Nigerians have in recent times shown little faith in the capacity of the police force to effectively manage crime. The police are supposed to be the public and the public the police so that effective policing in the society could be actualized. For a number of reasons, the Nigeria police lost sight of this relationship as the central organizing concept for police service. The police and the public had become so separated from one another that in some communities, an attitude of "we versus them" prevailed between the police and community members (Akpuru-Aja, 2019). As such, most communities set-up their own informal security bodies known as vigilante groups which in most cases have proven to be more effective to the community members in crime prevention and control than the regular police force (The guardian, 3rd August, 2017).

Nwangwuma (2000), argued that the formation of community vigilante groups in both rural and urban areas of Nigeria was an effort in finding a better security management outfit the community can rely on as a trusted security outfit for proper security of individual lives, their businesses and properties. Collaborating on the above, Kasali and Odetola (2016), maintained that the present community vigilante policing method emerged in Nigeria during a period when the country was overwhelmed by the issue of poor image of the regular police such as parading of suspects and not criminals. This was more reflected in unflattering names for the police like "kill and go people", "seekers of money", etc, all of which led to rise in crime waves.

In Anambra state, the realization of the important role of community policing in the form of vigilante groups could play in crime management especially at the community level and conscious of the abuses associated with vigilantism led to government mainstreaming them into the security architecture of the state through enabling laws, operational guidelines and logistics which effectively transformed them from vigilantism to community policing. This study interrogated the role and performance of these community based groups in crime management in Anambra state from 2014 to 2023.

Research Questions:

In Line with the above stated problems, research question is formulated to guide this study

1. How can community policing be improved to enhance security and public safety in Anambra state?

Objectives of the Study:

The broad objective of this study is to appraise the performance of community policing improved security and public safety initiatives in Anambra state. Specifically it seeks to

1. Find ways of improving the services of community policing for enhanced security and public safety in Anambra state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community

There is a plethora of literature available on the concepts community and community policing. Community is a word with many meanings and uses. It is one of the oldest forms of human organizations. It is viewed as a place in which people live (villages, cities, etc) or reflecting a population group bearing similar characteristics (rural dwellers, urban residents, etc) (Ezeh, 2002). Community varies from one area to another, but generally it operates on the belief that problems in the communities have solutions in the communities and the need that people making up the community participate in the matters affecting them at the community level (Ezeh, 2002). Community is defined according to Webster Dictionary cited in Ojukwu (2013), as a group of people residing in the same area or region and under the same government. Ojukwu (2013), defines

community as a conscious organization of individuals within a geographical area with definite and legal boundaries which support primary institution and use of some common facilities within the area. Olise (2007), maintained that a community is a group of people living together in a defined area and sharing common interests examples are towns and villages. World Health Organization (WHO), (1978), cited in Ojukwu (2013), stated that community consists of people living together in some form of social organization and cohesion. Its members share in varying degree, political, economic, social and cultural characteristics, as well as interests and aspirations including good health and protection of lives.

Sociologically, community is defined as a group of people who live in a geographically defined territory and share common socio-cultural attributes with similar socio-cultural institutions (political, economic, cultural and social). These may be business, common method of education, common world view, common religious beliefs and practices, etc. Community according to Holland (1994) refers to the people who reside in one locality and are subject to the same interests.

Community is the most important framework in which an individual or group of individuals learn how to grow and develop socially, politically and economically. It is the centre of activities which contribute significantly to the development of human values. A community can be found in both rural and urban areas. A community can also be homogenous that is consisting of people sharing the same culture example, villages

and town or heterogeneous that is consisting of people sharing different cultures example, urban cities (Ojukwu, 2013). Community constitutes a unit of solution in society and a process through which people take initiative and act in collectivity in which all economic and social services necessary for good life can be actualized (Bensman, 1994).

From the above, one can see a community as a group of people sharing a common geographical area, a common value system and common needs and interests.

Police

Police according to Brownson (2005) is a unit of armed forces established by the state for maintenance of law and order in the state. Moving further, he said that police is a branch or department of government which is responsible for the preservation of public order, safety and tranquility; enforcement of laws, the promotion of public health, safety, morals, the prevention, direction and prosecution of offenders. Nwakamma (2020) defined the police as the agency of government established in the state for the maintenance of internal order in the state. This definition highlights internal order or security as the main reason for the creation of the police. Though the primary role of the police is policing, policing is however not the sole responsibility of the regular police. This is because, there are also inexistence in the state other internal security management agencies that collaborate with the police in the responsibility of internal maintenance of law and order in the state. Again, not all the organ shouldered with the responsibility of policing for effective domestic security

belongs to the police force. Anmoli's Dictionary of Public Administration (2000) defines police as a branch of the armed forces that is responsible for the maintenance of public order and the protection of persons and property within the state from unlawful acts. Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary of Contemporary English (2000) defines police as an official organization established by the state whose job is to make sure that people residing in the state obey the law, catch criminals as well as to protect people and property. This definition entails that the rationale for police is to keep control over a particular area in order to make sure that laws are obeyed and people, their business and property are protected by preventing and controlling crime.

Policing

Policing as a concept has many interpretations from scholars. According to Baker (2008) policing is not just the activity of the state official police. It involves any organized activity that seeks to ensure the maintenance of communal order, security and peace through the elements of prevention, deterrence, investigation of breaches and punishments. Continuing, he maintained that it is a mechanism of governance as such it can be authorized and provided by both the state and non-state actors. Reiner (2003) on his own defines the policing as set of activities aimed at preserving the security of a particular social order or social order in general. Policing has been a necessary governance mechanism in all societies world over in order to maintain law and order. Policing particularly in modern societies characterized by diversities,

contradictions and patterns of crimes which arise from urbanization, industrialization, ideological differences, socio-political and economic inequalities is sine-qua-non for the provision of security and public safety in the society. Without effective policing, crime rates will always be on the increase and making good life unattainable. According to Mbachu and Umar, (2013) policing is a strategy-driven activity. Its aim is to maintain a high level of surveillance, security watch, strategic communication and enforceable action to deter any danger to life, liberty and people residing in a particular society. Arase and Iwuofe (2004) view policing from the institutional angle. According to them policing includes efforts that are more than the primary reliance on the formal regular police force and other security agencies of the state. It includes what individuals, groups, organizations or community does to prevent the commission of crime in the society and if inevitable to make legitimate reports to appropriate agencies especially the police for the arrest of suspects. This shows that policing is effort made to maintain effective security in an area especially through surveillance and the threat of sanctioning.

The importance of policing the community has been in existence since the classical times. According to Etim (2019) in their various writings, Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) and John Locke (1632 – 1704), have pinpointed authoritative reasons for civil society by moving away from state of nature characterized by all sorts of crime that threat the peaceful existence of human beings in the

society. Thus, policing according to Etim (2019) is the activity of enforcing the terms of the social contract and criminal law, and it takes place in any society can be said to have such law. Policing in modern times started with the commencement of the London Metropolitan Police by Robert Peel in 1829; and by 1960, almost all the nations of the world had adopted it. Curling from Robert Peel, the fundamental basis for local policing is that the police by its nature, is supposed to be accountable to the local government (State and Local authorities where they exist) and ensuring that they (police) would be responsive to local feelings as well as have good relations with the local community.

Community Policing

Community policing is a philosophy of community crime management and as such it does not imply that formal police are no longer in authority or that the primary duty of preserving law and order is subordinated. However, it is tapping into the expertise and resources that exists within communities in crime control and prevention and thus relieving the police of some of their burden (Kelling & George, 1988). Community policing, as a practice, predates both the colonial and post-colonial Nigeria society (Aniche & Okafor, 2018). It is basically what can be viewed as a new concept but old practice. Prior to the formation of Nigeria state, different communities inside Nigeria state had been protecting themselves internally. They had established structures and mechanisms for crime management (prevention and control) as well as law enforcements. The old philosophy of

community policing rested on the assumption that all citizens in the community have it as a duty, responsibility and obligation of participating in the policing of the community (Kwaja, 2017). Thus the slogan "be your brother's keeper" and "an adult cannot be around and she-goat delivers in prangs of pain". Community policing came as a result of rising levels of crime in the community and inability of the formal police alone to tame the tide. It came with the growing need among community members to participate in the fight against crime and disorder in the society. The goal of community policing among communities is to reduce crime by carefully examining the characteristics of problems in their particular community and then applying appropriate problem – solving remedies. (Kelling & George, 1988).

According to Abubakar (2018), community policing is a functional and effective partnership between the police and the community in indentifying crime and security challenges within communities and finding solution to the problem. Sequel to the importance attached to community policing for crime management, the 2008 Presidential Committee on Police Reform (PCPR) defines community policing as a straight forward concept of shared responsibility between the formal police and the community, with a focus on provision of efficient and effective service. This concept entails building trust, engagement of diverse policed community in identifying and prioritizing threats, developing crime control and community safety strategies as well as partnering

community's stakeholders to implement and re-evaluate the strategies. Trojanowicz (1998), defines community policing as a philosophy and organizational strategy that allows the police and the community residents to work together as partners in solving the problems of crime, fear of crime and physical disorder of a community in order to improve the overall quality of life. Okeke (2006), see community policing as a policing philosophy that promotes and supports organizational strategies to address the causes as well as reduce the fear of crime and social disorder through problem solving tactics and police – community partnership. This definition hinges on symbiotic relationships between the police and the community for crime management in the community. Police roles and functions are not only law enforcement but also include tackling a huge range of community problems ranging from armed robbery, burglary, assault, rape, drug abuse, etc that made society inhabitable for good life to thrive.

Security

The term security is derived from the Greek word se-cura which means to be in a state of fearlessness or fear. (Buzan, 2018) security is very vital for human existence, survival and societal development. It is concerned with the protection of life and property of one or more individuals living in a particular area. Security as a term has many forms; it could be physical security, economic security, health security, food security, cyber security, etc. The concept of physical and economic security is concerned with the protection of

life, property and economic wellbeing of people living in a geographical area (Buzan, 2018).

Security as concept has been associated with the safety and survival of the state, its citizens and properties and businesses from harm or destruction. Thus, it is an absence of any threat or harm to the state, its citizens and the properties and businesses of the citizens. Mroz (n.d) defined security as "the relative freedom from harmful threats". According to Buzan (2018), security is the pursuit of protection against threats. This definition entails that security involves the absence of threat to one's life or his properties. Security threat according to Gordon (2016), is anything that threatens the residents of a community or the things they value (Life, property, business, etc). Security threats are those action(s) of man which threatens the peace and safety of the people living in a particular area e.g. armed robbery, kidnapping, assassination, cultism, theft, burglary, arson, rape, etc.

According to Arnold Wolfers (in Emegha, & Sharkdam, 2020), security in any objective sense is the yard stick for measuring the absence of threats to acquired values; in a subjective sense, it is the absence of fear that such values will be attacked. According to Walfer in Buzan (1991), a nation is secure to the extent to which it is not in danger of having to sacrifice its core values if it wishes to avoid war, and is able, if challenged, to maintain them by victory in such a war. Also, Robert (2014) in Emegha and Sharkdom (2020), maintained that security as a term is used to refer to safety or protection against a future risk of injury or death due to severe

deprivation and the need for order and discipline as well as fair judgement and enforcement. Achumba, Ighomereho and Akpor (2020), defined security as a condition that exists due to the establishment of measures to protect people, information and property from hostile persons, influences and actions. They also maintained that it is the existence of conditions in which members of a society can carry out their normal daily activities without any threat to their life or property. It includes all measures designed to protect, promote and preserve citizens and the resources of individuals, groups, businesses, communities and nations against vandalism or violence. Okwori (2019), posits that security is state's or community's capabilities to defend its integrity from threats actual or imagined as well as acts of aggression from other potential enemies. According to Otto and Ukpere (2019), security means protections from potential and harmful disturbances in the daily life pattern of individuals at home, office or community.

Crime

Crime as a concept has no generally accepted definition among scholars. This is based on the fact that in some cultures, crime means any act that causes a disturbance of order and a deterioration of public safety. In some other societies, crime constitutes a steady descent into social disorder because it rest on the society (Archibong, Udobong and Antia, 2014) in Obiora (2021). According to Dambazau, (1994), crime is an act or omission that is contrary to public interest, and which is prescribed by an act passed by the parliament in the general interests of the society, and to which prescribed penalty is attached in the occasion of its violation. Continuing, Dambazau (1994), maintained that violation of crime involves four basic values which are; moral wrong, public wrong, law and punishment for the criminal. Sociologically, crime is an act that is anti-social conduct or behaviour that disrupts the norms of society (Archibong et al, 2014). For any act to be qualified as a crime, it must violate the criminal law of the society in question if not, the act or conduct does not constitute a crime (Igbo, 1999).

According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, crime is any activity that involves breaking of the law, an illegal act or activity that can be punished by law. It can also be defined as an act committed or omitted, in violation of a public law, either forbidding or commanding it, a breach or violation of some public right or duty owed or due to the whole community. Igbo (2002), defines crime as any act or omission resulting from human conduct which is considered in itself or in its outcome to be harmful and which the state wishes to prevent, which also renders the person(s) responsible liable to some kind of punishment. Anugwom (2002), maintained that crime is generally referred to as law-breaking behaviours of member(s) of a society which is in violation of the criminal law and therefore associated with punishment. This definition entails that once a member of a society breaks law either knowingly or unknowingly, such a person is subjected to punishment. Tappan (1960), opines that crime is an intentional act or

defense or justification and sanctioned by the state either as felony or misdemeanor.

Crime is a deviant behaviour that violates the prevailing norms and cultural standards prescribing how human beings ought to behave normal in the society. It is a serious threat to the social, economic and political security of a society as well as a serious factor associated with under development for no society can develop under high rates of crime. Along this line, Dambazau (1994), defines crime as an act or omission contrary to public interest and which is prescribed by an act passed by the parliament in the general interest of the state and to which prescribed penalty is attached in the occasion of its violation. The negative impact of crime to societal growth and development both socially and economically can never be overemphasized, hence Onoge (1998), maintains that crime no matter its size destroys both human and social capital and also damages the relationship between the citizens and the state.   It undermines economic growth by discouraging both local and foreign investments in the environment it manifests. Furthermore, it also undermines democracy, rule of law and the ability of the state to promote sustainable development and good governance.

Crime Management

Crime management is actions taken either by the community or state government to stop crimes and criminal activities from occurring in the society. Bello (2019) argued that crime management policy is the overall plan and strategy designed by the state to address insecurity or rising crime level in the state. According to Australian Institute of Crimnology AIC, (2012), crime management is variety of approaches that are applied by individuals, groups, societies, industries, non-governmental institutions and all the levels of government to target the numerous social and ecological influences that upsurge the danger of crime disorder and persecution. Continuing, it maintained that it is those actions that are intended to prevent or reduce the incidence of crime commission in the society which are done through the altering the environs in which they occur, or by superseding more approximately to alter the social or other circumstances which are supposed to have fundamental implication with respect to them.

Adebayo (2013), opined that crime management refers to the distraction of instruments that causes crime. Expatiating further, he maintained that crime management can be seen as the design of attitudes and actions that are directed at both decreasing the danger of crime and improving the sense of protection and security to promote the quality of life and as well as develop situations where crime cannot be committed. According to Brutai (2017) in Bassey and Ogbonnaya (ed.), (2019), crime management is the act of keeping or maintaining peace within the borders of a sovereign state of self-governing territory.   United States Department for Home-land Security (DHS), defines it as the act of keeping peace within the state territory generally by upholding the natural laws and defending it against threats. The council of European Union (EU), opined that crime

management also known as internal security management includes the use of multiple security sectors both formal and informal police to address major security threats which have direct impacts on the lives, properties, safety and well-being of the citizens of the state including natural and man-made disasters like forest fires, floods, storms, etc.

Akinlabi & Iheme (2021), define crime management as efforts or methods taken by the governments or competent authority to reduce crime in the state. Quinney (1968), in highlighting the importance of crime management in the society maintains that authorities of the state or community employ various mechanisms to regulate citizens' behaviour either by encouraging or discouraging certain behaviours. Take for instance, Nigeria's criminal justice emphasizes on reducing crime in the society through increased efforts on police prosecutorial and other strategies made by government or non-governmental actors using available human and material resources at their disposal.

Vigilantism

Vigilantism is a strategy for policing in the local communities in order to bringing about reduced crimes and criminal activities as well as protection of lives and properties of community members (Usman, 2018). According to Gaines and Cordner (1999), it is the act of keeping watch over a giving area in order to prevent or control crime from occurring in the area. Vigilantism entails that policing is not just the activity of the traditional police, but also involves any organized activity that seeks to ensure the maintenance of communal order, security and peace through the elements of prevention, deterrence, investigation of breaches and punishment. Thus, it is a mechanism of good governance in crime management and as such, it can be authorized and provided in the state by both the state actors and non-state actors (Baker, 2008). Vigilante group is defined as constituting members of a group of people who try to prevent crime or punish criminal(s) in their community especially because they think the police is not doing this enough. Vigilantism is the act of preventing, investigating and punishing perceived offenses and crimes without legal authority. It is defined according to Cambridge English Dictionary as the practice of ordinary people in a place taking unofficial action to prevent crime or catch and punish people believed to be criminals.

Community vigilante groups are considered as referring to different groups of people in communities who take up arms to protect themselves, families and their community as a whole when they (community) feel the absence of government security (Ihemeje, 2021). It is also a term used to describe an unofficial security outfit of a community that provides security and safety of its members (Akinlabi and Ihemeje, 2021). According to Oyayi (2016), community vigilante groups are groups of people who carry armaments to protect themselves and their community when they felt that state government has failed its role of protecting and securing them. A community vigilante group is seen as that part

of citizens security initiative influenced by incessant criminal activities which undermine the safety of lives and properties in the community. It is made up of members of a group of people who try to prevent crime as well as punish criminals in their community: especially because they think the police are not effectively doing this. It is organized according to the traditional and cultural system and strongly reinforced by the authority of the traditional ruler and elders of the community (Chukwuma, 2022). In Anambra state, the realization of the important role vigilante groups could play in crime management and conscious of the abuses associated with vigilantism led to government mainstreaming them into the security architecture of the state through enabling laws, operational guidelines and logistics which effectively transformed them from vigilantism to community police. This study therefore interrogates the roles and performances of these community based groups in crime management in Anambra state from 2014 to 2023.

Factors Responsible for the Emergence of Community Policing

Community policing through the instrumentality of Community Vigilante Groups entails efforts put in place by community members and set up a group devoted to crime and vandalism prevention in the community. According to Obianagha (2011), the police and citizens relationship in Nigeria is characterized by prejudice and preconceived motions. The masses tend to resist the police by viewing the police as their enemy while the police always try to assert

their superiority and authority on the citizens. According to Ezelisiaku (2013), human right abuses, brutality, false and illegal detention of innocent citizens are another factor responsible for the establishment of community policing known as vigilante groups. The law specified the basis through which the police can arrest, detain or prosecute a suspect or somebody deemed to have committed an offence, crime or offended the law. This implies that the person must be reasonably informed on why he/she is being arrested and must not be detained for more than 24 hours without being charged to a court of competent jurisdiction. The reverse is most often the case in Nigeria, hence, the rationale for community policing (Ezelisiaku, 2013). World over, policing is anchored on protection of lives and properties of citizens, to control and fight crimes, investigate, arrest, detain and prosecute any person that has offended the laws of the state. But in Nigeria, police arrests and detains perceived suspects indefinitely before investigating. According to the editorial of the Vanguard of 19th June, 2008, the Nigeria police hardly informs a suspect either orally or written or even caution them before statements are taking from them. They are most often never allowed bail even when the nature of the offence warrants bail. When they do, they collect various huge sums of money from the suspects after detaining and torturing brutally in order to elicit "confession" (Chukwuma, 2005).

Lack of quick response to crime scenes by the police officials because they are always far

away from the people also is another factor responsible for the formation of community policing vigilante group by communities. Most often before the police come to the scene of crime, the criminals must have committed the crime and gone away not minding that the police got the crime information on time. This has equally led to trust deficit between community members and the police. The community does not believe on the efficacy of formal police in community internal crime management as most criminals reported by the community members to the police are often released from police custody (Ezelisiaku, 2013). But the community needs a policing outfit that is nearer to them and ready to respond whenever called as quickly as possible. Crimes are committed in the community by the members of the community. Community policing officers (vigilante members) by being members of the community know the criminals more than the official police who are not members of the community. Their presence in the community scares and deters people who are nursing any intention of committing any crime. Again, when vigilante member is on guard, the criminals or suspects cannot run away or be declared "have never been seen" because they are members of the community and as such known by the community (Chukwuma, 2005).

The Nigerian Police and Crime Management

The police are the statutory constitutional body responsible for the preservation of law and order as well as the protection of individual members of the society in the exercise of their legal rights. Similarly, section 214 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended provides the police with the responsibility for public safety, public order and crimes prevention within the state of Nigeria (Imobighe, 2003).

Ikuteyiyo (2018), in conceptualizing internal security and crime management argues that internal security or crime management encompasses all efforts at ensuring that the country is free from all forms of internal crisis and the responsibility rests with the conventional police and other paramilitary forces. In exceptional cases, the military may be called upon to assist the police in crime management for internal security and stability in the state. According to section 217(2) of the 1999 constitution as amended, it empowers the Nigeria Armed Forced to suppress rising insecurity and act in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the president and commander-in-chief. This is corroborated by section 8(1) and (3) of the Armed Forces Act of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004. This aspect of law specifies that the "operational use of Armed Forces" in Nigeria is essentially for the purpose of maintaining and securing public safety and order in the country.

Crime is a dynamic phenomenon as such; its management must also continue to be dynamic. As crime rate continues to rise recently in Nigeria, its management equally requires a comprehensive programme of security sector transformation involving a complete change in the system that governs the security establishment in the country

(Bryden, 2011). Thus, it is one of the reasons behind state backed community vigilantism. Security sector transformation encompasses a wide range of institutional processes that impact virtually upon all aspect of an organization's existence for success to be ensured. This implies that there is need for paradigm shift from the traditional model of Nigeria policing where authorities are centralized and police only respond to call for services which has a marginal impact on crime management (prevention and control). This assertion is supported by Network on Police Reform in Nigeria (NOPRIN) – a civil society organization. It argues that the traditional mode and organization of policing in Nigeria have become more of an albatross than a veritable solution to the challenges of insecurity. It went further to maintain that, the police stations in Nigeria are "torture chambers" and "the police are more likely to commit crimes than prevent them" (Abubakar, 2012).

These social vices as Udefuna (2014), argued have continued to make efforts of the police force grossly low in crime management. In collaboration with the view of NOPRIN, the Presidential Panel on National Security (PPNS), recommends that effective policy response to the multi-dimensional threats confronting the Nigeria state must be predicated on the determination of the "remote causes of breach of peace and security, potential and current flash points of conflicts, role and effectiveness of security agencies as well as the imperatives to be taken by the three tiers of government" (National Security Report, 2011). The

import of this, is that Nigeria's internal security section deserves urgent government attention (crime management) to cope with the escalating menace of high rising domestic crimes and anarchist movements, if not, the country may soon begins to experience the type of scale of insecurity that countries such as India, Iraq, Libya, Pakistan, Sudan and Afghanistan have been battling for years (National Security Report, 2011).

Community Policing and Crime Management

Recently in Nigeria, high rising levels of crime of all sorts have led the Nigeria government to institutionalize structures and mechanisms for police and community partnership for crime management (prevention and control). This is in light of the difficulties associated with formal police officers in effective policing in Nigeria generally. This is unlike in the past, when the police was regarded as the point of resort in times of emergency (Kwaja, 2019). Today, Nigerians especially those in rural communities view the police as an oppressive occupying force established by the state for suppression of the citizens. Police brutality most often sparks off rural and urban disorder and this has made some members of the public to perceive the police as being at the forefront of maintaining an unjust system that emboldens criminality of all sorts due to its weakness in law enforcement. Thus, there is a serious disconnection between the people, community and the police which makes the people not to cooperate with the police in crime management.

Crime is a dynamic phenomenon and as such only a super-dynamic police organization can cope effectively with the increasing complex profile of crime. Hence, many democratic countries world over have adopted community policing using community vigilante group or neighbourhood watch group as their policing philosophy. The principles of this new philosophy entail that effective policing should focus on partnership between the formal police, civil society, communities and development associations as a means of collectively ensuring safety and security in communities (Arase, 2019). The goal is to have the people that will actively take part in policing their communities in partnership with the police for their own welfare. This partnership will not only enable the community people know their security concerns but also help them to address them holistically.

This idea of finding best policing practices for crime management in communities led to the formation and establishment of community policing outfits (Vigilante group) initiative in almost every part of Nigeria. This is as a result of the gradual failure of the traditional policing method otherwise known as "Reactive Policing Technique", whereby the police commence its work after the crime must have been committed and the criminals out of sight. Community based vigilante group is highly essential in community crime management. While the provision of security in the society is the sole mandate of the state which it does through the use of police and other security agencies, presently in Nigeria, it is clear that this important task cannot be achieved by the police and other official security agencies alone without the support and participation of community members. Good security is a public good without which development and good life cannot occur in the community (Arase, 2019). In the face of escalating security challenges confronting the country recently, the study argues community policing through vigilante groups will be of effective help that shall rescue the nation from high rising security challenges that is threatening the existence of the country.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts George .J. Thompson's Gap theory as its theoretical standpoint. Gap theory is a behavioural theory developed by George .J. Thompson in 2006. Gap theory is germane to understanding the police public partnership in crime control and prevention in the community. The theory argues that when there is mistrust between the public and the police it creates a growing gap between the police and the community in too many areas. People mistreated by the police withdraw from the police and are never eager to help the police. Regular police as an agency of the state created to take care of the people so that peace and tranquility will reign in society. Until regular police officers are taught to care for the people, the "gap" increases. As the gap continues, the crooks in the community benefit from the "gap". However, the better the police treat the people, the safer they feel and the more the gap shrinks. As the gap closes, it closes on the crooks and bad elements in the community. (Friedman, 2012).

According to George .J. Thompson (2006), the quality of contact with the people by the police affects the way and manner the people in turn perceive the police. Therefore to improve on the quality of contact with the public, the police should be taught about the "90 – 10 principle" of the community. The theory maintained that in societies with high rates of crime, 90% of all the people in the community are good, hardworking and decent folks trying to make a living with dignity.   10% are the criminals – the murderers, kidnappers, armed robbers, drug dealers, bandits and other bad elements that need to be taken off the streets of the community.

However, the problem with police work that promotes crime in the communities as well as creates the "bad gap" is that too often, 90% of police contact is with those 10%. This distorts police view of the community. The police easily become cynical and tend to "go to war" against those 90% of the communities rather than taking proactive role that will prevent crime and arrest criminals. This according to Thompson (2006), explains why the police are most hated by the community where they are most needed. People mistreated do not give intelligence information or extend hands of friendship to those who mistreated them.

Application of the Theory

The validity of George .J. Thompson's Gap theory could be seen as the main reason for the establishment of community policing initiatives in the communities for effective and prompt security provision in Anambra state. The security situation in Anambra state prior to the focus of this study is a Hobbesian

nightmare – that is a state of anarchy characterized by high rates of crime and criminal activities like armed robbery, kidnappings, burglary, terrorism, car snatching, cultism, etc in almost all the communities of Anambra state. To make matters worse, the regular police do not respond proactively to crime scene or arrest criminals as quickly as reported. This therefore brought about mistrust, lack of confidence and wide gap between the public or the communities and the regular police in the state. As this gaps widens, it made live unbearable to community inhabitants as well as chased away most influential and wealthy sons and daughters of the state to other parts of the world. Most importantly, it chased away customers or business men and women coming into the state for business activities. This thus impedes development and poses a serious and harmful threat to the realization of sustainable development in the state. Ineffort, to solve this unpleasant condition that threatens the wellbeing of individual members of the community in particular and the community as a whole, the community established for themselves a community policing initiative that will guarantee their safety as well as provide for them environment that is crime free. This community policing initiatives in the form of community vigilante groups work in partnership with the regular police for effective crime prevention and control especially in the rural community where the presence of regular police is rarely felt because they are always far off from the community.

For effective performance of the vigilante groups, their members are drawn from the community concerned. This makes it easier for them to respond to crime scene as soon as the crime occurs unlike the regular police that must be called upon before they can answer distress call. Also, they know the community terrain very well more than the regular police. All these make them to carry out their duties of crime management effectively as well as the reason the state recognizes their efficiency and accord them legitimacy.

Article 14(2), (A) of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria as amended states that the provision of security, welfare and conducive environment shall be the primary responsibility and goal of the government. With increase in crime rates and state government knowing the importance of security as a basic need of the people openly supported communities in the establishment of community policing outfits with different names to provide effective security to the communities. It also enacted other policies to support the effort of the formal police, and community vigilante groups in crime management across the communities. Some of the policies include: the prohibition of tinted glass vehicles, installation of Closed Circuit Television and street lights across strategic roads and markets in both the rural and urban communities of the state, increased provision of security materials and salaries to community policing outfits, etc. These are to ensure that community vigilante groups controlled the rising rates of crime in the state. With these effective support, no community presently in Anambra state is

without indigenous community vigilante group and this has helped to reduce greatly the rising incidence of crime of all sorts and insecurity in the state.

The reason for indigenous community policing members is based on the fact that criminals reside inside the communities. Community members know them very well as well as the community environmental terrains. Nigeria formal police personnel are not enough to police the whole communities of Nigeria or know the criminal hideouts in communities. Making indigent resident community members as community vigilante personnel has reduced to a great extent the problem of criminals terrorizing communities. With community policing outfits, criminals in communities do not have field days any longer as it was before and thus brought about reduction in criminal related activities in the communities.

Empirical Review

Many scholars have offered several views on community policing as an effective strategy on crime management in Nigeria. This is as a result of rising levels of crime in Nigeria and the inability of formal police to effectively provide adequate security to lives and properties of the citizenry especially those in rural communities. This inability to provide effective security have made some state governors to inaugurate quasi police outfits known as community policing vigilante group with different nomenclature such as vigilantes, neighbourhood watch, community guards or traditional police; however, vigilante group is the most common term or

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unofficial security used to complement the efforts of the formal police in crime management in the state (Kalu and Wapmuk, 2020). Crime management are acts, strategies or method employed by state governments, non-governmental actors, communities, etc in preventing or reducing crime level in the society using human and material resources at their disposal (Ihemege, 2021).

Chikwendu, Oli and Nwankwo (2015), in their paper titled "The Role of Vigilante Service Groups in Crime Control for Sustainable Development in Anambra State, South-East Nigeria" maintained that effective security is vital for sustainable development in the state. The findings from their study revealed that increase role of crime and the inability of the formal police to control and prevent crime led to public loss of confidence in the police. They also noted that the inability of formal (regular) police to protect lives and properties of the citizens in the state effectively which is the main reason for their establishment, led communities into the formation of community policing initiatives in Anambra state. This is supported by the study conducted by Chukwuma and Alemika (2004), in the paper "Internal Security challenges in Anambra State". The study revealed that rise in crime rates in Anambra state in particular and Nigeria in general was one of the major reasons for communities constituting and patronizing of vigilante outfits in Anambra state.

In addition to the above, their work further revealed that community vigilante outfit members are community indigenous able bodied youths recruited and maintained by the community concerned and changed with the function of crime management in the community. They are not far away from the community but resident in the community thus are pro-active to crime situations than the regular police who are far away from the community and only respond to crime situation when called upon by the community with its attendant unnecessary delays as a result of bureaucratic bottle necks associated with bureaucratic institutions. Thus, the regular police are reactive to crime scenes as such before they can come into the scenes, the criminals must have finished their operations and moved away. This reactive nature of regular police becomes a thing of serious challenge to crime management in the community as it gives rooms to criminals to have free space to operate and terrorize the community.

Collaborating, Osah and Osita (2017), in Abubakar (2019), in his work "National Intelligence Agency and the challenges of Internal Security and Community Policing in Nigeria", observed that community based vigilante group initiative is a potent weapon in the quiver of the government and various communities to stem the flow and tide of all forms of crime in Nigeria. Equally, they maintained that community oriented policing outfits is actuated by the growing need for the community or people at the local level (grassroots) and their immediate environment to have the benefits of local police services to supplement the effort of the regular police and other law enforcement

agencies inorder to ensure and guarantee the safety and security of their lives and properties. They equally maintained that though the regular police are doing good job in ensuring community safety by apprehending and prosecuting criminals but their functions are more of reactive and such a report or call must be registered with them before they could swing into action which most often do not give the community their desired results. They concluded that community policing, is a philosophy that aims at promoting the community partnership with regular police to proactively address the immediate conditions that give rise to public safety issues such as crime social disorder fear of crime, etc.

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the survey research design. The area of study is Anambra State. The target population used in this study is traders, farmers, artisans, civil servants, police officers and religious groups especially Christian women organization who were indentified during their annual August meeting identified from three communities from three local government areas and from the three senatorial zones of the state.

Table 1: Distribution of Anambra State Population by Local Government Areas and Senatorial zones

S/N	Senatorial Zone	Local Government Areas	Population
1	Anambra Central	Awka North	112,192
		Awka South	189,695
		Anaocha	284,215
		Dunukofia	96,517
		Idemili North	431,005
		Idemili South	95,517
		Njikoka	148,394
2	Anambra North	Anambra East	152,149
		Anambra West	167,303
		Ayamelum	158,152
		Ogbaru	223,317
		Onitsha North	125,918
		Onitsha South	137,191
		Oyi	168,201
3	Anambra South	Aguata	198,391
		Ekwusigo	158,429
		Ihiala	302,277
		Nnewi North	155,443
		Nnewi South	233,362
		Orumba North	172,362

	Orumba South	184,548
Total		5,527,810

Source: NPC, 2016 Estimate

Sample Size and Technique

In consideration of the large size of the study area and population, sample survey technique was used. The size of the sample was determined using Taro Yamane (1968) formula for selecting sample size. The formula is thus:-

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where n = Sample Size

N = Population Size

1 = Constant

e = Degree of error (take 0.05)

$$= \frac{738,597}{1 + 738,597 (0.05)^2}$$

$$= \frac{738,597}{1780.025}$$

N = 400 (approximate).

Thus, the choice of four hundred (400) as sample size for this study is supported by social sciences research scholars especially Nwana (1981), who opined that choosing a representative sample, has no fixed number or fixed percentage.

Tools for Data analysis

The data generated from the questionnaire and returned questionnaire were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as tables, frequencies and simple percentages to demonstrate the responses that were obtained from the respondents. The hypotheses were tested based on the response from the respondents using simple percentages.

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Data Presentation

Four hundred (400) copies of questionnaire were administered on the respondents of the six communities on the basis of 65 each. However, the researcher was able to retrieve three hundred and eighty (380) copies of the questionnaire. Twenty (20) copies of the questionnaire were not returned. This is statistically represented as follows using simple percentage formula:

$$\frac{F}{N} \quad X \quad \frac{100}{1}$$

Where   F   =   Observed Frequency
                N   =   Expected Frequency
Applying this formula we have;

Number of Distributed Questionnaire   =   400
Number of Returned Questionnaire   =   380
Number of Not Returned Questionnaire   =   20
∴   Percentage of the Returned Questionnaire   =

$$\frac{380}{400} \quad X \quad \frac{100}{1} \quad = \quad 95\%$$

Percentage of Not Returned

$$\frac{20}{400} \quad X \quad \frac{100}{1} \quad = \quad 5\%$$

Therefore; the data presented and analyzed in this study are based on the three hundred and eighty returned copies of the questionnaire which represents 95% of the sample size.

Analysis of the questionnaire distributed according to the six selected communities in Anambra state.

Analysis of the questionnaire according to the six selected communities from three local government areas from the three senatorial zones.

Communities	Questionnaire Distributed	Returned Questionnaire	Percentage (%)
Nnewi	65	65	17.1
Otuocha	65	62	16.3
Ogidi	65	65	17.1
Igbariam	65	63	16.6

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Abatete	65	65	17.1
Otolo	65	60	15.8
Total	390	380	100

Source: field survey, 2023

The table shows the questionnaire distributed and returned from the six communities selected for the study. It also shows their percentages.

Research Question

How can community policing be improved to enhance security and public safety in Anambra state?

Questionnaire item

Improved salary, financial support from both community and the state government to vigilante outfits is necessary for improved security and public safety in Anambra state. Do you agree?

Table: Respondents' Responses

Responses		Percentages (%)
SA	200	53
A	120	31.5
U	10	2.7
D	30	8
SD	20	5.2
Total	380	100

Source: Field Survey 2025

Table reveals that 200 and 120 respondents representing 53% and 31.5% respectively are of the opinion that improved salary financial inducements and materials support to vigilante members are of great importance to the actualization of security and public safety in Anambra state. 10 respondents representing took no stand. 30 and 20 respondents representing 8% and 5.2% respectively disagreed and strongly disagreed. The implication is that both communities and Anambra state government should improve the salaries of community policing outfits as well as provide them adequate security materials for better performance of their functions.

Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations
Summary of Findings

On the research question "How community policing initiatives could be improved to enhance security and public safety in Anambra state?" From the data gotten from the respondents and presented in the tables 24, 25, 26 and 27, the findings maintained amongst other things that improved salaries to the security outfits personnel, effective training and re-training of the security outfits

members, provision of adequate modern security materials and constant monitoring of the activities of the community policing outfits were very necessary in bringing about of improved security and enhancement of public safety in the communities in particular and Anambra state in general. These findings were supported by Umeobika (2012), in his paper titled "Synergy of the Local Vigilante Groups and the Police in Anambra State: A proactive step to combat crime".

Recommendation

Crime and insecurity pose a serious challenge to the growth and development of the citizens and the state. Based on the finding from this study, the researcher makes the recommendation:-

Constant training and retraining of community policing outfits personnel

Practice they say makes perfect. Constant training and retraining of the personnel of the community policing outfits will make them to always have an edge over the criminals. During the training, they will be exposed to new security materials and technologies and the way to handle them. They will also be averse with new techniques criminals used to operate and thus ever ready to arrest criminals easily.

Conclusion

Since its inception, especially the period under-study, the group has effectively reduced the rates of crime incidence in the communities. It has also assisted the regular police with information box about criminals and in locating the criminal hideouts and kidnappers den in the bushes across the communities. Some of the reasons behind their success are usually based on the fact that they are indigenous to their communities as such in a better position to fish out criminals operating in their area faster than the police or other law enforcement agencies who are not indigenous to the community. Also, because they know the nooks and crannies of the community which help in being proactive to crime management as they respond to crime scenes as rapid as possible and relate to the regular police afterwards. Their presence in the community as community members and internal police officers of the community, make most criminals to flee away from the community to avoid arrest and prosecution because they are known.

However, not minding their successes in crime reduction, a lot of challenges have been recorded as disturbing the effective performance of the group in security service provision in the communities. Some of the challenges include poor salary, inadequate training of the vigilante personnel, politicians and wealthy men interference in their duties, lack of adequate materials for effective security, employment of ex-convicts and criminals as security members.

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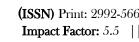Trojanowicz, R. & Blucqueroux, B. (1990). Community policing*: A contemporary perspective. Otto: Anderson Publishing Company.*

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