

# Efficacy of Community Policing and its Funding for Public Security: A study of Imo Vigilante groups in Imo State,

Oko Otuu Obasi, Winifred Nwabuaku Kanu, and Christopher Chijioke Ugwu

## Introduction

There is a raging gale of insecurity sweeping across many countries of the world today. This takes many forms, ranging from kidnapping, terrorism, insurgency, armed robbery attacks and militancy to civil unrests. This culminates in increasing threat to lives and property and, by extension, to progress and development. Worried by this disturbing state of affairs, various national governments, international organizations and the global community have been holding conferences and workshops as well as adopting various policies, programmes and mechanisms to curtail this global scourge at various levels. Among the mechanisms instituted by many countries to deal with this growing incidence of insecurity at various levels are the military, the police and the vigilante groups. Although there are some observable similarities in the functions of these mechanisms, they tend to vary with nations and regions, in terms of their structures, organizations, sophistication, operations and effectiveness, in consonance with the differential levels of technological development of the nations. Thus, security operatives in the advanced economies are, incontrovertibly, more elegant, more robust, better equipped, more sophisticated and more effective and efficient than those in the developing economies.

There has been a growing awareness that the conventional and seemingly stereotyped approach to the problems of insecurity is becoming increasingly inadequate and less suitable for combating contemporary security challenges. This fact was highlighted by Girei and Mohammed (2016) in their joint paper. Perhaps this has engendered the new approach in policing, epitomized by community policing, which symbolizes a sort of paradigm shift in police operations. This new approach, according to

many writers, implicates a partnership of all stake holders or synergy of the conventional police and the public in policing services (Ayisire, 2017; Friedmann, 1992; Ikuteyiujo and Rotimi 2012 in Ikuteyiujo, 2009).

## Statement of the Problem

Insecurity of lives and property is recognized as a growing global problem with huge humanitarian implications. Not only does the problem bring untold social, economic and psychological hardship on victims and nations, but it also threatens the social stability and socio-economic progress of nations, regions and communities. But beyond this, the problem also costs huge sums of money to tackle; and this explains why many individuals, governments and international organizations commit substantial proportions of their earnings or budgets to addressing security problems.

Nigeria, like many other nations of the world, is not, and has never been, insulated from insecurity; not with all the threats posed to lives and property in the country by *Bokoharam*, militancy, Fulani herdsmen attack, armed robbery, kidnapping for ransom, politically-induced extra-judicial killings, time-bomb of mass unemployment, pervasive and grinding poverty, to mention but a few. The people no longer sleep with their two eyes closed.

In the face of these increasing threats to lives and property in the country, the conventional security operatives, and particularly the Nigeria Police Force, seem to have lost their potency and, therefore, cannot adequately cope with the problem of insecurity (Olabambo, 2021). In its search for enduring solutions to the hydra-headed problem of insecurity, the Nigeria Police has adopted community policing as a new approach. However, not much research has been carried out especially in the target area of this research to determine how effective this new approach has been

in curtailing the problem. In other words, very little empirical work has been done in this area to determine how effective or otherwise community policing has been and the extent to which it is funded in the area. Furthermore, understanding the challenges facing community policing in order to effectively address the security problems would be germane, given that the resultant information may be very useful for effective and efficient intervention policy and action.

**Broad Objective:** The broad objective of this study is, therefore, to examine the extent to which community policing has been effective in achieving public security in the target area.

**Specific Objective:** Specifically, the study seeks to:

- (i) assess the level of effectiveness of community policing towards addressing crime and other security problems in Imo State of Nigeria
- (ii) identify areas in which community policing has failed in its efforts to curtail crime and security problems in the state
- (iii) assess the level of funding of community policing in Imo State
- (iv) identify challenges of community policing in the State

**Hypothesis:** The study hypothesizes that there is a relationship between level of funding and effectiveness of community policing

### **Significance of the study**

The study is significant in that the nation is presently facing severe security problem. The findings of the study will be a useful guide to, and resource material for security and law enforcement agencies in designing and implementing relevant policies for combating crime and security problems in Nigeria. It will also be useful to the communities in their efforts to solve crime and security problems and thereby maintain societal peace.

### **Review of Literature**

#### **The Thematic Concepts**

#### **The Concept of Public Security**

The concept of Public Security assumes different meanings in different cultural, ideological, political and organizational contexts. In its general sense, security means protection of a person or persons or property or country, or all of these against threats, harm or attack. It is also used to describe those responsible for providing the protection. Security is a paramount necessity to the existence of all animals, and particularly human beings. According to Kolodzie, in Essay UK (n.d.), security is any issue of national interest, also considered a “special form of politics”. The Wikipedia (n.d.) defines security as the degree of resistance to, or protection from harm which applies to any vulnerable and or valuable asset, such as a person, dwelling, community, item, nation or organization.

Security has been classified into several types, including internet security, food security, home security, physical security, human security, social security, political security, economic security, national security and public security.

Public Security, the concern of this study, has become a more complex phenomenon in meaning and action than it was in the past; and, as noted by the Organization of American States (OAS) (2017), security threats in modern times have gone beyond the traditional militancy sphere to include problems that have direct or indirect impact on people’s lives, such as political violence, illegal drug trafficking, cybercrime, civil unrests, etc. The Wikipedia (nd.) views it as “the function of government which ensures the protection of citizens, organizations and institutions against threats to their well-being and to the prosperity of their communities.” Public security is somehow synonymous with community security, which includes both group and personal security. It implies that community members are free from fear of crime and violence.

#### **The Concept of Community Policing**

Nations across the globe guarantee security to their citizens by the application of several measures which include the establishment of the police and other institutions. The Open Society Foundation (2011) opines that “the primary point of contact most citizens have with their government is a public officer”. Underscoring the vital place of Law enforcement and, by implication, the agents responsible for this, the Foundation noted that “competent and honest law enforcement is a mainstay of the rule of law”, while

“insufficient or ineffective investment in the public security sector can result in weak or non-functioning security institution, unable to respond to, or deter crime and violence”.

The inadequacies of the conventional police operations, especially in the face of rising crime wave may, perhaps, have led to the adoption of the new approach involving communities or the people in policing. Community policing has been defined as a “strategy of policing that focuses on police building ties and working closely with members of the communities (Wikipedia, n.d). Udoma (2017) defines it as a social contract between members of the public and the police. It involves the synergy or collaborative efforts of the police and communities. Community policing is said to have originated from the United States in the 80’s as a philosophy and tactic of integrating the public or community into the police institution not necessarily as police personnel, but as collaborators in the security affairs of the nation for optimal efficiency and responsiveness (Wong, 2009 cited in Kasali and Odetola, 2016).

The concept is said to have derived from the “Broken Windows theory, which posits that a broken window is not against the law and, therefore, would be I by the “profession”, police office, although it is indicative of social disorganization and therefore requires the attention of community –oriented officer (Wikipedia,n .d)

The view has been expressed that community policing has been given different names, in different contexts and at different times, such as “foot patrol”, “crime-prevention”, “problem-oriented policing”, “police community relations” etc. neighborhood-oriented policing” (Ferreira, 1996, citing Friedmann, 1992;Brown and Veneziano, 1994).Community policing has been associated with such peculiar features as “indigenization, domicility, topography, language and culture” (Udoma, 2017).

In his own opinion, Dickson (2007) stated that effective community policing necessitates team work, flexibility, all-inclusiveness and continual feedback. Other features that distinguish community policing from traditional policing include:

- (i) Its reliance on community-based crime prevention by utilizing civilian education, neighborhood watch and multiple techniques, as against sole

reliance on police patrol (Watson, Stone and DeLuca, 1998)

- (ii) Its major goal of assisting the public or communities to establish and maintain a safe, orderly social environment
- (iii) Its technique of mobilizing and coordinating the police, government resources, citizens, community resources, local governments, and business partners to address crime and other security challenges in communities (Ferreira, 1996)
- (iv) Structural and operational shift from an emergency response-based system to proactive techniques, which predisposes police officers, in conjunction with members of the community, to be actively committed to crime prevention, community problem solving, more openness and to more dynamic quality-oriented Law enforcement-community partnership.( Burden, 1995; Ankony, 1999; Bobinsky, 1994)
- (v) Increased officer accountability to the civilians they are supposed to serve.
- (vi) Decentralization of the police authority, with more discretion and initiative allowed lower-ranking officers (Wikipedia, n.d.)
- (vii) Reliance on new concepts, which include developing more sources of information, identifying a variety of solutions to problems and concern for more accurate measures of police effectiveness (Brown and Veneziano, 1994).

### **Transnational Applications of Community Policing**

According to Brown and Venaziano (1994), the drives towards community policing include the desire on the part of the police to improve its relations with the public and to share the burden of crime control and maintenance of order with the public. This implies that it enhances the role of law enforcement agents from a static to a more dynamic, quality-oriented status that encourages partnership with the community in controlling crime.

From his own critical stand, McQuade (2015) opined that there was nothing progressive about community policing. Reflecting on the type of community policing applied in Chicago, he noted that “while community policing may help address the crisis of police legitimacy in the short term, there is no evidence that it will bring meaningful accountability or otherwise, curtail state violence”

In America, critics of community policing have argued further that the concept is a new name for an “old method of policing” still in practice (Borrella, 1998). Still from the pessimistic perspective, Morgenthau (1990) deprecated community policing, based on its high cost, frustrating effect on the police and community dramatic change in the way the officers are to be trained. It has been further posited that the success of community policing depends on the community’s perception of, and attitude to police and its operations. Besides, the police and the community may not share common values, as each may want to exploit the established relationship between them to its own advantage or in advancing its own interest or agenda (Law Teacher, 2013)

Regretting that community policing is not being implemented in the way, and for the purpose it was originally conceived and designed by the originators, Childress (2016) states:

But in cities where Broken windows (community policing) has taken root, there is little evidence that it’s worked as intended. The theory has instead resulted in what critics say is aggressive over-policing of minority communities, which often create more problems than it solves. Such practices can strain criminal justice systems, burden impoverished people with fines for minor offenses, and fracture the relationship between police and minorities.

In Kenya, Ruteere and Pommerolle (2003) noted that community policing in the country is characterized by ambiguities in its conceptualization and may, therefore, in practice, operate to reinforce undemocratic and oppressive structures in Kenya society. Other critics have opined that community policing is more complicated than the traditional method, and lacks universally accepted criteria for evaluating it, (Wikipedia, n.d.)

### **Divided Opinions about Community Policing**

As noted already, community policing varies from country to country and from region to region, in terms of nomenclature, application, modus operandi, and degree of efficiency and effectiveness. Since its inception, community policing has been trapped in a web of polemics, with some writers applauding it, while others view and describe it in pessimistic terms. The pessimistic views are represented by Klockars (1988) who, in referring to the “rhetoric” of community policing, as Barley describe it, argued that its lofty goals notwithstanding, community policing “cannot work in reality”. On his own part, Waddington, in Ferreira (1996), described community policing as a “romantic delusion”, which does not capture “the world we have lost”, adding that there had never been a time when the police officer was everyone’s friend, and there will never be such a time in the future. From the point of view of politics, Short, as cited in Ferreira, noted that involving the police in community development would pose “serious questions of political accountability”, a situation which is capable of undermining police neutrality. Alluding to the conservative character of the police forces, Klockars (1988) argued that the police forces are never anxious to make changes to their behaviour and, therefore, merely use community policing to gain legitimacy.

In spite of the enormous criticisms against community policing, many other writers still extol it. Successes of community policing in various places, have been documented in several works cited in Ferreira (1996), which include Wycoff and Skogan (1993) in Madison Wisconsin; McEbroy et al. (1993) in New York City; The United States National Institute of Justice (1992) in Seattle, Washington; Bayley (1989) in Singapore; and The United States National Institute of Justice (1995) in Chicago. Thus, many writers have justified the need to have and promote community policing based on several factors, including the advantage of



local inputs in terms of ideas, personnel and other resources (Ren, Cao, Lovrich and Gaffney 2005), police-community synergy (Sykes, 1978), incapability of the police alone to handle all security problems in a given community (Wikipedia, n.d.), its emphasis on problem solving and proactive approach in dealing with security challenges of communities (Tylor and Fritsch, 1998).

### **Community Policing: The Nigerian Version**

Community policing is, relatively speaking, a novelty in Nigeria which both the police and the communities are striving to come to terms with. Crime statistics released by the Nigerian Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2016) indicates that between 2013 and 2015, stealing, with a figure of 110,303 (male and female) topped the list of offences in Imo State, followed, in a descending order, by armed robbery with a figure of 26,974 (male and female) and robbery with 24,601 (male and female). The Socio-politico-economic conditions of today may have pushed up these figures.

Against the background of the increasing crime wave in modern Nigeria, Ayisire (2017) provided statistical evidence that revealed the inadequacy of policemen in the country. According to him,

With a population close to 200 million, policed by the paltry sum of less than 400,000 policemen, we have an abysmally low ratio of over 1/500 policemen. In between these figures is the number of policemen attached to Government officials, political leaders and Elite groups. You can imagine how many policemen in actual fact are devoted to policing of the general public.

Based on the above scenario, he surmised that “Nigeria is grossly under-policed”. Perhaps, this situation, in the Nigerian case, provides further and stronger reason for the adoption of community policing in the country. According to Ayisire, “By getting community members involved, the Nigeria police will have more resources available for crime prevention activities instead of being forced into ‘an

after the fact response to crime’ that we have been experiencing”.

Community policing in Nigeria, at the moment, revolves around vigilante groups coordinated by the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN). The VGN is a Non-Governmental Organization founded around the concept of vigilante (Ayisire, 2017). Registered with the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) in 1999, in the sphere of public security, the VGN operates in the 36 states of the Federation and the Federal Capital Territory (Ayisire, 2017). The Group, whose main objective is to promote community policing, crime control, prevention and protection of lives and property in Nigeria, collaborates with the police to enhance policing and security in the communities. Pointing to the advantages which modern community policing has over the traditional method, Ayisire impliedly stated that the police in the former seem to operate as “strangers” in the communities where they serve; while in the latter, they are relatively on ground on a more permanent basis and “will be better able to pinpoint and mitigate the underlying causes of crime”. However, it may be argued from the other side that the permanence and its attendant familiarity may breed corruption and other forms of abuses.

In addition to dealing with security challenges, which constitute the operational domain of traditional policing, community policing involves the synergy of the police and members of the community in addressing, beyond criminal problems, activities that may, on their face value, not be defined in criminal terms, but have potentials for engendering criminality, if not nipped in the bud.

Although the police is often said to be “the friend of the public” in Nigeria, the relationship between the two parties is anything but friendly. The relationship is characterized by lack of mutual trust and confidence between the two, a situation which writers like Tamuno and Alemika projected as one of the nation’s colonial heritage (Ayisire, 2017). These writers pointed out that the colonial forces including the police, where established, organized and maintained a social order that gave rise to repression, a culture of impunity, corruption, incivility, brutality and lack of transparency and accountability to the people.

According to Ordu and Nnam (2017), “Maintaining a good relationship between the police and the community remains the primary means of overcoming the barrier in information gathering and dissemination,

which gives rise to effective community policing. In its own optimistic words, the Law Teacher (2013) noted that “community policing is seen as an effective way to promote public safety and to enhance the quality of life in a community”.

IJSER

## **Challenges in the Implementation of Community Policing**

Challenges in the implementation of community policing may vary as much as the approaches or the application strategies. In Nigeria, the challenges are many and include bribery and corruption, selective enforcement of the law, negative public perception of the police, lack of trust and confidence, poor and inadequate manpower, and 'godfatherism' (Ordu and Nnam 2017). Other challenges, highlighted by Otu and Aro (2013), are partisanship, constitutional loopholes and lack of transparency and accountability. Beyond all these, however, are technological handicap, evident in poor and obsolete equipment as well as poor funding.

Elsewhere, writers and researchers have mentioned the absence of universally acceptable evaluation parameters, limited or absence of community support and conceptual/ definitional problem (Wikipedia, n.d.).

### **Theoretical Framework**

#### **Functionalism**

Functionalism is a macro sociological theory that conceptualizes human society as analogous to a biological organism that is made up of different but interconnected and interdependent parts that function in harmony to ensure the stability and survival of the biological organism. The major proponents of functionalist theory, according to Haralambos and Heald (1980), are Auguste Comte (1798-1857), Talcott Parsons (1902-1979), Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) and Radcliff – Brown (1935).

Functionalism sees human society as a system and states that to understand how the system works, one needs to understand how the component parts work in relation to one another and to the entire system. The functional unity of society can be explained by the collective efforts of communities to institute community policing as a way of maintaining public security. Functional unity as a postulate espouses the idea that the social system works together with internal consistency. The idea of collective desire to maintain public security through community policing is taken care of by the concept of value consensus. For the functionalists, the social system is maintained through value consensus and this is what links individuals in society. On this pedestal, there is the general consensus on the need for the protection of

lives and properties in order to improve the quality of life, hence the imperativeness of security in social life.

Functional pre-requisites which are aspects of functional indispensability can help us to understand the need for the establishment and use of vigilante groups to protect lives and properties in order to achieve social stability. For instance, the essence of integration is to ensure the achievement and maintenance of social and emotional solidarity of individuals and groups in society. Incidentally, this is within the ambit of security outfits, such as the vigilante groups. A society without security is likely to go into extinction, with time.

Adaptation entails the process of securing sufficient facilities such as money, wealth, material and technical resources to solve the security and other problems of a given social group. The mobilization of these resources by a group to provide themselves with the needed security in order to preserve lives and properties of members is accounted for by this postulate.

#### **Area of the Study**

The study area was Imo state, which is one of the five states in Southeast Nigeria. Imo state has 27 local governments areas distributed into 3 political zones which are Orlu, Owerri and Okigwe. The choice of Imo State was based on both convenience and the researchers' profound knowledge of the state in general and the selected cities in particular. The 3 cities under study attracted the investigative interest of the researchers because of their dominant population densities, urban status and, by implications, the high rate of crime in them. The estimated population of Imo State is 3,934,899 as of 2006 (NPC, 2006). The figure may be much higher today.

With Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe as its major cities, Imo State is largely rural, with agriculture as the dominant occupation. Even public servants, and those engaged in other occupations, practice one form of agriculture or the other as a complementary source of livelihood. Education is generally acknowledged, especially by government, as the largest industry of the state. This is why the state is among those that have the highest school enrolment at all levels of the nation's educational system. Its high educational profile notwithstanding, the state has limited number of

manufacturing industries. The business sectors that experience most rapid growth in the state, are hotel industry and petrol stations. The state has a large population of artisans and traders. With a large army of unemployed graduates and school leavers, the state is understandably witnessing a high rate of crime of all sorts.

Owerri, one of the 3 major cities constituting the study areas of this study, has the largest estimated population of 420,000. It is the largest city in the state. It has hundreds of primary and secondary schools, as well as tertiary institutions, namely, Imo State University, Federal University of Technology, Federal polytechnic, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Federal College of Land Resources and Imo State University of Agric and Environmental Studies. The city can be best described as an educational and public servants' city. It is the administrative capital of the state. Orlu is the second largest city in the state and the largest in the senatorial zones, named after it. With an estimated population of 401,873, Orlu is acknowledged as the commercial and industrial nerve centre of Imo State. Okigwe, the third largest city in the state, and former host site of Imo state university, has an estimated population of 132,237 (NPC, 2006). It is a model city traversed by two major roads, Owerri-Afikpo, and Portharcourt-Enugu express way, and hosting a large population of immigrant workers from other states.

**Methodology**

This cross-sectional study was conducted in the 3 major cities across the 3 geo-political zones of Owerri, Orlu and Okigwe. The researchers adopted purposive sampling technique to select 5 communities each from the 3 major cities. The selection was based on their proximity to the major cities and, where community policing (Vigilante Groups) were identified. These communities include Urrata, Awaka, Egbu, Mbieri and Emekeukwu in Owerri Zone; Umuowa, Amannachi, Orlu, Amaifeke and Osina in Orlu Zone; Umuchima, Umuokpara, Ope, Umulolo and Ubaho in Okigwe Zone. These gave a total of 15 communities covered in the study area. Furthermore, the study employed systematic random sampling in which every 4<sup>th</sup> house was sampled in each of the selected communities. A total number of 15 houses were selected in each of the sampled communities and any adult member available was administered the questionnaire. This meant that a total of 225 community members were given the

questionnaire. However, at the end only 209 copies, representing 92.9% response rate, of the questionnaire were fully completed. This formed the sample size for the study. In addition, with the help of key informants, 5 copies of the second part of the questionnaire were administered on the members of the vigilante groups in each community sampled. This number was considered appropriate due to the small population of the groups. This gave a total number of 75 copies of the questionnaire distributed among the groups. The selection of members of vigilante groups was based on availability. The main instrument for the collection of data was questionnaire, complemented by personal interviews. The questionnaire that was used contained both structured and unstructured questions and was divided into 2 sections. The first section was meant for the community members, and it mainly covered information on level of effectiveness, level of funding and areas of weaknesses of community policing. The second part of the questionnaire was meant for the members of the vigilante groups. This section contained questions on the level of adequacy and regularity of funding as well as the challenges faced by the groups in their operations. Furthermore, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with key informants, including community leaders, members of Vigilante groups, the youths, women groups and heads of households for more detailed information. Their selection took into consideration such characteristics as age, gender, awareness and income level. In all, a total of 6 in-depth interviews were held in each of the communities sampled. The interviews were conducted on market free days and on days fixed by the interviewees to ensure high rate of participation. The main analytical technique employed was descriptive statistics to enhance the universal accessibility of the results.

**Results and Discussion**

**Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by indication of level of effectiveness of community policing by community members**

Level of effective	Frequency	%
Very effective	69	33.0
Fairly effective	49	23.4
Ineffective	57	27.3
Not effective	34	16.3
Total	209	100



Very low	18	23.7
Undecided	1	1.3
Total	76	100

**Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Responses on Areas of weaknesses of community policing.**

Responses	Frequency	%
Prompt response to distress call	37	17.7
Proper control of activities of members	49	23.4
Arrest of offenders	2	1.0
Maintenance of good relationship with the community	2	1.0
Maintenance of good relationship with conventional police	40	19.1
Satisfactory patrol	49	23.4
Protection of life and property	25	12.0
Others	5	2.4
Total	209	100

**Table 6: Distribution of Respondents by Responses on Regularity of Funding of Community Policing**

Responses	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	11	14.5
Agree	23	30.3
Disagree	30	39.5
Strongly disagree	11	14.5
Total	76	100

**Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Responses on level of funding of community policing.**

Responses	Frequency	%
Strongly agree	55	26.3
Agree	51	24.4
Disagree	63	30.1
Strongly disagree	40	19.1
Total	209	100

**Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Constraints in Community Policing**

Responses	Frequency	%
Lack of facilities	12	15.8
Inadequate funding	39	51.3
Inadequate office accommodation	2	2.6
Undue government interference	12	15.8
Undue community interference	6	7.9
Mismanagement of fund	4	5.3
Total	76	100

**Table 5: Distribution of Participants by Responses on Level of Funding of Community Policing**

Responses	Frequency	%
Very high	6	7.9
High	23	30.3
Low	28	36.8

**Table 6: summary table of bivariate correlation showing the relationship between level of funding and effectiveness of community policing**

Spearman's rho	Regularity of Funding	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.018
		N	209	209
	Effectiveness	Correlation Coefficient	.163*	.163*
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.018
		N	209	209

police, but the problem is that they are not well organized and not well paid.

Another group of respondents acknowledged the effectiveness of the group, but pointed out that they have lapses which border on funding. According to it: *vigilante is an effective means of checking criminal activities, which they want to work, but sometimes they become inactive when they feel they are not adequately motivated. They are funded only by members of the community, who are mostly not-well-to-do financially. There are situations where the required funds hardly come on time. The government that is supposed to be the major source of funding does not help.*

Furthermore, according to one of the reports from the interviews with a community member, *the level of crime has somehow reduced since the community increased what they used to give them as salary. Before now people used to live in fear due to the activities of kidnappers and armed robbers in the community. But some months back, a meeting was held with the members of vigilante to find out how we can tackle the problems; everything was centered on adequate funding to make them active.*

Similarly, most of the responses from the interviews with members of the vigilante revealed that this approach to community policing is effective, but is constrained due to inadequate funding to make the necessary facilities available. This view was highlighted by one of the respondents thus:

*We help our community to fight criminal activities even more than the police; we know everybody and what they do in this community. We inform the police when and where there is crime. However, the problem is that we lack the necessary gadgets such as sound vehicles, smart phones, sophisticated arms and other useful implements to work with. Moreover, we are not adequately paid. The funds do not come regularly and it is very small.*

Nevertheless, there were few divergent views in some communities concerning the effectiveness of the group. It was gathered from this perspective that the group is not effectiveness due to the recklessness of the members. Respondents in this category complained that sometimes the vigilante groups were being used by politicians to serve their own selfish interests. Sometimes, they become criminals themselves, especially when they are not properly remunerated. According to one of them;

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The above result in table 5 shows a positive and significant relationship ( $r = .163$ ,  $p = .01$ ) between level of funding and effectiveness of community policing. This finding implies that as the level of funding increases, effectiveness of community policing also increases. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is a relationship between level of funding and level of effectiveness of community policing was accepted.

**Presentation of Qualitative Data**

In the coverage areas, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informants, such as community leaders, heads of households, women, youths and members of vigilante groups. The interview was conducted in each of the selected communities. The reports from the qualitative data illuminated more the quantitative data collected. The In-Depth Interview (IDI) reports are in line with the findings from the quantitative data.

The majority of the respondents from the IDI acknowledged that community policing, represented by vigilante group, would be effective in combating crime but for a few drawbacks. This view was highlighted in the opinions of a few of the respondents that: *vigilante people are active, when it comes to dictating and arresting criminals. They know these criminals and where they are even more than the*

*Vigilante group in this community has not helped in reducing crime, they are greedy; some of them are corrupt; they keep demanding one thing or the order from community members. There are even cases where they have misunderstanding and quarrel among themselves due to the money given to them by politicians. There is need to check the conduct of the group members, so that the bad ones among them can be fished out.*

On the part of the vigilante members, it was also revealed through the interview that apart from the issue of inadequate funding, problems, such as low co-operation from some of vigilante members, community members as well as from members of the conventional police frustrated their efforts. One of the respondents lamented thus:

*We try our best in fighting crime, but members of the community and even the police do not cooperate with us. There are cases where we arrest a criminal and handover to the police, before you know what is happening, he is released due to the connection he has. If the police and community members cooperate with us, I assure you that there will be peace in the society.*

### **Discussion of findings**

From table 1 above 56.4% of the respondents affirmed that vigilante operations have been very effective in combating crime while 43.6% did not agree that vigilante operations have been effective. From the result therefore it can be deduced that community policing is an effective means of combating criminal activities in the coverage areas.

The result in table 2 shows areas of weaknesses of members of vigilante, as reported by the community members. It revealed that “improper control of the activities of members” and “lack of satisfactory patrol” with 23.4% had the highest number of responses as major weaknesses of community policing; while “arrest of offenders” and “maintenance of good relationship with the community” had the least number of respondents, which is 1.0%. Other areas of weaknesses worthy of note according to the data are “maintenance of good relationship with conventional police” and “prompt response to distress calls”.

The result in table 3 shows responses by the participants on level of funding of the vigilante groups. The result shows that almost half, 50.7%, of the participants affirmed that the level of funding is

not adequate, while almost the same number, 49.1% disagreed with that statement.

The result in table 4 shows the responses by members of the vigilante groups on the major constraints facing community policing. The result shows that inadequate funding was acknowledged by the group members to be the most constraining factor with a response rate of 51.3%; followed by “lack of facilities” and “undue government interference” with response rates of 15.8% each. Other constraining factors noted in order of importance were “undue community interference, 7.9%”; “mismanagement of funds by the heads”, 5.3%, and “inadequate office accommodation” 2.6%, though the rate of occurrence was quite insignificant.

The result in table 5 shows the responses on the level of funding as perceived by the members of vigilante groups. The result shows that few members of the group were of the view that the level of funding was adequate, with a response rate of 38.2%; while majority with a response rate of 60.5% affirmed that the level of funding was inadequate.

The result in table 6 shows the responses by members of the vigilante on regularity of funding. The result shows that only 44.8% of the members agreed that the funding was regular while a greater proportion 54% were of the view that the funding was irregular.

### **Conclusion**

This study was provoked by the increasing wave of insecurity in Imo state and particularly in three major cities of the state. It therefore addressed the problem in order to determine the level of success or failure of community policing in the state as well as the challenges. Various literature reviewed revealed that different nations and communities adopt different community policing strategies under various names which were found to be effective in controlling crime. This study revealed that community policing in the form of vigilante was effective in controlling crime only in places where they were adequately funded. Thus, there was a relationship between level of funding and effectiveness in the area. Furthermore, it was revealed that community policing in the communities faced multifarious problems including low funding, undue interference by the government authorities, office accommodation problem, inadequacy of facilities and mismanagement of funds. These issues need to be addressed to improve public security in Imo State in particular, and Nigeria

at large.

### Recommendations

Based on its findings, the study recommends:

- i. Re-engineering of the community policing system in Nigeria with a view to involving the public more in the policy making processes and making the police-community team accountable to the communities.
- ii. Increased funding of the system to enhance its effectiveness in the state.
- iii. Synergy among community members, vigilante groups and the police in solving security problems in Imo State.
- iv. Provision of adequate facilities and proper training of those directly concerned with the operations of the system in order to strengthen their operations and enhance the effectiveness of the system in curtailing crime and security problems in the state.
- iv. Avoidance of undue interference by community members and members of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) in the operation of VGN.
  - v. Selection of people of integrity from the communities to operate the system.

### REFERENCES

- A.E. Olabambo, "Community Policing in Nigeria: Implications for National Peace and Security", *International Journal of Management, Social Sciences, peace and conflicts studies (IJMSSPCS)* Vol. 4, No 1: 469 – 488. 2021, <https://www.ijmsspcs.com> >
- A.J. Borrella, "The Bias Against Community-Oriented Policy" (cover story). *Police Patrol: The Law Enforcement Magazine*. 1998 [www.policemag.com/channel/patrol/article/1998/10/community-oriented-policy-is-it-nonsense-or-successes.aspx](http://www.policemag.com/channel/patrol/article/1998/10/community-oriented-policy-is-it-nonsense-or-successes.aspx)
- B. McQuade, . "Against Community Policing". U.S: Jacobin <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/11/obama-chicago-black-lives-matter-police-brutality-2015>
- B.R. Ferreira, B.R., "The use and effectiveness of community policing in a democracy". *National Criminal Justice Reference Service*, Washington, D.C. A. 1996 [www.ncjrs.gov](http://www.ncjrs.gov).

- C.B. Klockars, "The Rhetoric of Community Policing". In: Greene, J.R. and Mastrofski, *Community Policing: Rhetoric or Reality*. New York: Praeger pp.239-258. 1988
- Dickson, A.Y. (2007). "Community Policing". In: Arase, S.E. &Innofor (Eds). *Policing Nigeria in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- E. Ayisire, "The Imperative of Community Policing and Security in Nigeria". *The Guardian*. 2017 <http://guardian.ng/features/the-imperative-of-community-policing-and-security-in-nigeria/>
- E.M. Watson, A.R. Stone and S.M. DeLuca, "Strategies for Community Policing". Print. Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall Inc. 1998
- Essay UK (n.d): <http://www.essay.uk.com/free-essays/international-relation-politics/defining-concept-security.php>. Accessed July 28, 2017.
- G.E. Ordu and M. Nnam, "Community Policing in Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of Current Developments". *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences*. Vol. 12, Issue 1, Jan-June, 2017
- G.M. Sykes, *Criminology*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich. 1978
- J. Udoma, "In defense of Community Policing in Nigeria". *Nigerian Tribune*.2017
- L. Ren, L. Cao, N. Lovrich, and J. Gaffney, "Linking Confidence in the Police with the Performance of the Police: Community Policing can make a Difference". *Journal of Criminal Justice* 33, pp. 55-66, 2005. <https://psycnet.apa.org/record>
- L. Ikuteyiujo, "The challenges of community policing in Nigeria". *International Journal of Police Sciences and Management*. 11(3): 285-293.2009, DOI: 10.1350/ijps 11:3.
- Law Teacher, "Advantages and Disadvantage of Community Policing". <https://www.lawteacher.net/free-law-essays/criminology/advantages-and-disadvantages-of-community->



- [policing.php?cref=1](#) 2013
- M. F Brown, and C.A. Veneziano “An Evaluation of Community-Oriented Policy Program in Eight Mission Law Enforcement Agencies” Southeast Mission State University: Criminal Justice Department. 1994.
- M. Haralambos and R.M. Heald, *Sociology: Themes and Perspectives*, University Tutorial press, Slough. 1980
- M.A. Kasali and R.G. Odetola, “Alternative Approach to Policing in Nigeria: Analyzing the Need to Redefine Community Policing in Tackling the Nations Security Challenges”. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*. Vol 9. Issue 1. pp.98-115. May 2016, <https://www.umes.edu/AJCS>
- M. Ruteere, and M. Pommerolle, “Democratizing Security or Decentralizing Repression. The Ambiguities of Community Policing in Kenya”. *African Affairs*. London: The Royal African Society. 102, Pp. 587-604, Oct. 2003, Doi: <https://doi.org/10.1093/affairs/adg065>
- M.U . Girei and Z. Mohammed, “Community Policing in Nigeria: Challenges, prospects and implications for National Security in International Journal of comparative studies in International Relations and Development Vol. 4, No 1: 2354 – 4198; Online: 2354 – 4201. 2016
- National Bureau of Statistics, “Crime Statistic: Nigerian Prisons”. Abuja: National Bureau of Statistics. 2016
- National Population Commission of Nigeria (NPC), [www.population.gov.ng](http://www.population.gov.ng). 2006
- O. Burden, “Community Policing”. *National Fraternal Order of Police Journal*. Fall/Winter: pp.31-35.1995
- Open Society Foundations “Open Government Partnership Police and Public Security Sample Commitments”. 2011, [www.right2info.org/resources/publications/policing-and-public-security-sample-commitments-sept-2011](http://www.right2info.org/resources/publications/policing-and-public-security-sample-commitments-sept-2011).
- Organization of American States (OAS) “Public Security”. OAS: More Right for more People. 2017, [www.oas.org/on\\_topics/public-security.asp](http://www.oas.org/on_topics/public-security.asp).
- P.B. Horton and C.L. Hunt, *Sociology*, McGraw-Hill Inc., Japan. 1980
- R. Bobinsky, “Reflections on Community-oriented Policing”. FBI Law Enforcement Bulletin. Pp 15-19. 1994
- R. Tylor and E. Fritsch, “Core Challenges Facing Community Policing: the emperor has no clothes”, *Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Today* pp. 1-5. 1998
- R.M, Morgenthau, “Does Community Policing Work? Beware of its Limits”. *The New York Times: Opinion*. [www.nytimes.com/1990/12/30/opinion/does-community-policy-work-beware-of-its-limits.html](http://www.nytimes.com/1990/12/30/opinion/does-community-policy-work-beware-of-its-limits.html). 1990
- R.C. Ankony, “The Impact of Received Alienation on Police Officers’ Sense of Mastery and Subsequent Motivation of Proactive Enforcement”. *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management* vol.22, No 2. pp.120-132. 1999, <http://www.robertankony.net/publications/impact-perceived>
- R.R Friedmann, “Emerging issues and future prospects. In: Community Policing”. Palgrave Macmillan, New York. Pp187-207, 1992 [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-07200-9\\_10](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-137-07200-9_10).
- S. Childress, . “The Problem with Broken Windows’ Policing”. *Frontline*. 2016 [www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/the-problem-with-broken-window-policing/](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/the-problem-with-broken-window-policing/)
- S.E. Otu and G.C. Aro “Dealing with professionalism and acquiring and managing legitimacy in a constitutional democratic policing in Nigeria: Where goes the procedural justice approach?” *Journal of the Institute of Justice and International Studies*, 13, 149-170, 2013. <https://search.proquest.com>



T. Parsons, *The social system*, The free press, New York. 1951

Wikipedia, “Public Security”. *Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia*. (n.d)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/public-security>.

Wikipedia, “Community Policing”. *Wikipedia. The Free Encyclopedia*. (n.d)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/communitypolicing>.

IJSER