PUBLIC PERSEPTION OF THE SERVICES OF VIGILANTE GROUPS IN ANAMBRA STATE

Onwuegbusi, Chike Abden
Department of Sociology/ Anthropology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria

Abstract
So much has always been said about the activities of the vigilante groups in Anambra State. The objective of this study therefore was to investigate the perception of the citizens of the State with regards to the activities of the vigilante groups in the State. The cross-sectional survey design was employed for the study. 540 adults aged 18years and above were selected for the study using the multi-stage sampling technique. The structured questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data while Focused Group Discussion (FGD) and In-depth Interview guides were used to collect the qualitative data. The quantitative data were sorted, coded and analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Univeriate and bivariate statistics were used to describe and interpret the quantitative data; while the qualitative data were analyzed using the theme-based method of content analysis. The study revealed that in spite of a number of shortcomings and limitations of the vigilante members, the citizens of the State are still very supportive to them for the services they render to ensure a crime free society. It was equally revealed that the efforts of the groups contribute towards a reasonable control of crime in the State. The study recommends among other things, consistent and regular training of the vigilante members in the State.

Key Words: Crime Control, Public Perception, Social Conditions, Social Services, Vigilante groups.

Background

Criminality, though a negative phenomenon is a necessary part of every society. Durkheim (1933) defined crime as a social product, determined by social conditions that are capable of being controlled only in social terms. Macionis and Plumer (2005) observed that all societies have crime and deviance; that sociologists generally agree that there is no such thing as a crime free society. However, even as every society has crime existing in it as a necessary component of its entire constitution, it is never a welcomed appeal to most of the members of the society, hence, the great effort being made in every society in every epoch in combating crime.

During the pre-colonial era, strategies employed at combating and preventing crime and deviance, fell within the ambience of certain indigenous social institutions and groups. For instance, in pre-colonial Igbo society, prevention of crime was primarily the social obligation of the entire citizenry at various capacities ranging from grown-up members of kindred to the members of various age grades who were fit and agile.

However, this system of crime control was distorted with the advent of colonialism. According to Onyeozili (2005:33) with the advent of colonialism came the distortion of the traditional institutions and values which had from time immemorial sustained harmonious relationship, peace, and security of lives and property in the pre-colonial African communities. Thus, the British colonial government in Nigeria established the formal police for the purpose of ensuring security in the country. Alemika (1993) asserted that, the

Police existed primarily to promote harmony and security of lives and property in the society and whether or not these functions were realized in the colonial era is strongly disputed. Many scholars believe that in the colonial era, the style and principles of policing were anti-people. It was rather meant to serve and protect the interests of the colonial masters (Chukwuma & Alemika, 2000; Rotimi, 2001; Okafor, 2006; Ikuteyijo, 2009). Rotimi (2001) also argued that the police in colonial era operated under the philosophy of strangers policing strangers.

In the post-colonial era, the style of policing was a carried over from the colonial epoch. This was evident in the style of law enforcement used by the post-colonial police, in the daily discharge of their duties. As maintained by Rotimi (2001), the post-colonial Nigerian Police also served the interests of their financiers who held the position of power and nothing better could be expected from them, since he who pays the piper dictates the tune. Hence, the operations of the police force have been plagued with inefficiency and loss of public confidence in the police force.

Alemika and Chukwuma (2005) noted that as a result of police inefficiency and ineffectiveness in crime prevention and control, detection and apprehension of criminals, poor rule of law records, the violation of human rights, lack of accountability, incivility and wide-scale corruption, the public holds the police in low esteem and is fearful of their brutality, extortion and ineffectiveness. The public loss of trust and confidence in the police and in the state, in the face of unrelenting upsurge in violent crimes in the society, led to the

advent and formation of informal policing strategies, otherwise known as vigilantism or neighbourhood watch (Abrahansen & Williams, 2005).

Abrahansen and Williams (2005) also stated that the limited state capacity to provide safety and security to the public has led to self-help responses on the part of citizens including vigilante activity and in addition to vigilantism, is a rapid growth in commercial security. Smith (2007) averred that public yearning for vigilantism could be considered as a response to wide spread negative perception that the police, the courts and other institutions of the state were too corrupt to curtail the level of crime.

The Vigilante Groups who have been seen as better alternative to the police refers to some members of an official or unofficial group within a community that partner with the police to keep watch in a community for the purpose of maintaining law and order in the community and preventing crime. The group may or may not have any government support.

The growth of vigilantism and the fact that various States of the federation are giving approval and solid support to the role of vigilantism indicates that there operations are valued. However, a number of serious concerns have engaged the minds of scholars and well-meaning individuals in the country as regards to their operational logistics. These concerns range from concern about the character of the vigilante members, the manner of admission of the members, the training they receive, the remuneration and upkeep of

the same, the power relationship between the members and the citizens, to the allegiance of the vigilante members to the State authority as well as the level of cooperation between the groups and the conventional security forces of the State.

Problem of the Study

The consistent increase in the number of vigilante groups in Anambra State and the lack of proper arrangement for the remuneration and maintenance of the group members are not without their attendant problems and challenges. Vigilante groups have often derailed from the primary duties assigned to them, in the face of conflicting interests both at the State and community levels. The vigilante group members have often slacked in their objective mission and channeled their loyalty to the powers that be, both at the State and the community levels.

It is argued that vigilante group members had turned their loyalty to the State authorities, helping in actualizing the nefarious motives, objectives or goals of State authorities and have often played along with their preferences because of monetary benefits (Umeagbalasi, 2012). The same trend is obtainable in various communities where the vigilante group members would always submit to the wishes of powerful individuals in the society or where they are used as instruments of power tussle between individuals aspiring for leadership positions.

The law establishing the vigilante groups in Nigeria stipulates that vigilante groups should work in collaboration with the Nigerian

police to ensure security of lives and properties. It is unclear if the vigilante groups observe this law to the letter in their day to day activities. Human Rights Watch and Centre for Law Enforcement Education in Nigeria (2002), noted in reference to Anambra State that the vigilante groups rarely, if ever, render any lawful help and assistance to the police.

Hence, with the increasing number of vigilante groups in Anambra state and the corresponding challenges facing them, one then wonders if the motives for the establishment of the vigilante groups are being achieved or marred. Hence, this research work is poised to evaluate how residents of Anambra State perceive the operations and activities of vigilante groups in combating crimes in the State. This is important because the operations of the vigilante groups may not succeed without the required support from community members whom they are meant to serve and protect.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this study is to examine how the members of the public in Anambra State perceive the services of the vigilante groups. Specifically, the study is set:

1. To ascertain the perceived problems confronting vigilante groups in crime control in Anambra State.

2. To examine public reaction to the continual use of vigilante groups for crime control in Anambra State.

3. To identify ways by which the services of the Vigilante Groups can be enhanced in the Anambra State.

Literature Review

Perceived Commitment of Vigilante Groups

The importance of commitment to duty especially in security cannot be overemphasized. Chukwuma (2002), observed that the inability or total lack of commitment of the police to respond adequately to the safety and security needs of citizens in various communities, made the citizens resort to self-help measures, otherwise known as informal policing or what Scharf (2000), called 'community initiated policing'.

Owumi and Ajayi (2013), however maintained that neighbourhood-watch organizations and vigilante groups are still functioning effectively and people consult them on security issues probably because of the perceived ineffectiveness and inefficiency of the official law enforcement organisations. This view is similar to earlier view of Burton, Plessis, Legette, Louw, Mistry and Vuuren, (2003), who had the view that people repose confidence on vigilante services for the very fear they have of crime and for the loss of faith in the State's ability to protect them.

Alemika and Chukwuma (2003), was of the view that the vigilante groups were committed to their duty and this level of commitment and effectiveness lay primarily in the fact that the members are from within the communities in which they operate; also for the fact that they have a determination to ensuring security, and vested interest in curbing crime and are under the control of, and are accountable to the community.

Yaqub and Olaniyi (2004), also observed that in many regions in

Nigeria, parallel local organizations and vigilante groups have proved far more effective in combating crime than the state law enforcement agencies. They equally remarked that in several cases, communities trust vigilante groups more than the police, because of the effective, reliable and prompt ways they tackle crime issues.

Other scholars however, have contrary opinions about the commitment of vigilante groups. These groups of scholars have the mind that the vigilante groups most often abandon their statutory functions and align themselves with political stalwarts, committing a range of atrocities including torture and execution without fair trial and this betrays the truth about their commitment to duty (Human Rights Watch 2002; Alemika & Chukwuma, 2003; Ololade, 2012).

However, notwithstanding the fact that the vigilante groups have not been able to bring lasting solution to criminality in their various areas and communities due to their own setbacks in getting the total support they need both from government and from willing individuals, also because of their own shortcomings of not being completely committed to their duty, the people they serve still patronize them. Adejoh (2013), upheld this view when he reasoned that despite the weaknesses in the commitment and effectiveness of the vigilante groups, they still have the support and mandate of the people for ensuring their security and safety through preventing and detecting crime and also dealing with minor criminals.

Perceived Challenges facing Vigilante Groups in Crime Control
Despite the perceived effectiveness and commitment of vigilante

groups, their operations have been noted to face many challenges. Marx and Archer (1999), noted five outstanding organisational problems which the vigilante groups are facing. These problems are their relationship to the police and legal system; their legitimacy in the eyes of the communities they wish to serve; the recruitment and management of personnel; the choice of appropriate operations; and the maintenance of resources, incentives, and motivation for the groups' survival. Alemika and Chukwuma (2003), identified their problems as: lack of funding by the government, harassment from the police when carrying out their duties, lack of proper training and adequate arms, lack of basic operational equipments such as flashlights, warm clothing, rain boots, rain coats, identity cards, whistles, uniforms etc. Other shortcomings experienced by the groups include, poor screening of new members and presence of touts or 'bad eggs' among the vigilante members, multiplicity of the organisations, and poor accountability by the groups.

Ekeh, (2002), reacting to shortcomings of the Nigeria Police, reasoned that many Nigerian communities no longer rely on the police for their security; rather they have resorted to unregulated and violent reprisal against suspected sources of their collective endangerment. Of course the preference of the vigilante groups to the police by the people would generate rift and mutual distrust between the two security bodies, the vigilante group would always accuse the police of corruption, while the police would accuse the vigilante of indulging in extra-judicial executions and illegal detention of suspects. This scenario creates a serious setback to the

security activities of the two bodies, and thereby worsening the security challenges in the country.

To Olaniyi (2005), vigilante groups often encounter threats from hoodlums who use sophisticated weapons in their robbery operations. He equally noted that the vigilante groups have problem of lack of cooperation among the members of the group particularly from the higher-ranking officers who do not respect certain decisions made.

Public Reaction to Continual use of Vigilante Groups

Alemika and Chukwuma (2004), noted that vigilante services became a necessity in countries and communities where police services are either lacking, inadequate, politicised and unserious. In such societies, people have lost total confidence in the police as a result of their corruption, incompetence or brutality. Ekeh (2002), saw vigilantism as filling a vacuum in the absence of all committed police services. Amnesty International Worldwide (2013), maintained the view that the rise in crime and insecurity and the sense of low performance by the security forces has led to the expansion of vigilante groups at local and State levels in various countries where they exist.

Varied reactions are expressed regarding the services of the vigilante groups. While some people are comfortable with their services in spite of their numerous short comings, others react

vehemently about their continued operation, taking into account their abuses and excesses. Minnaar (2001), relating the South African experience observed that in the absence of any strong civic organisations in certain areas as well as the widespread lack of a police presence or response to crime, vigilantes have been able to morally claim the high ground on the basis of 'protecting the community' or of administering justice for the benefit of the residents in their area. There is no wonder therefore, that vigilante activities, are given such support by citizens across the board. Minnaar, quoting Beaver (1997), acknowledged however that not all residents in a community are supportive of vigilante operations. The vigilante members often use their power to intimidate the residents and are beyond reproach themselves. Yet in spite of the lack of support by some members of the community, many victims of the vigilante abuses fear to report such and refuse to testify against the perpetrators because they fear reprisals.

In Nigeria, Amnesty International Worldwide (2013), observed that armed vigilante groups routinely carry out killings and unlawful detentions and inflict torture and cruel inhuman and degrading treatment to citizens. Overwhelming evidence of the violations of human rights by the vigilante groups in various states of the nation is on record. Amnesty International noted that allegations of extortion, harassment, arson, destruction of public property, or armed robbery are often made against members of these groups.

government support and approval, people lost confidence in them due to their excesses. Elechi (2003), related that

> The vigilante operations were initially, hailed by the people who were obviously frustrated with soaring armed robbery and police ineffectiveness…. Fear and disappointment soon followed as Nigerians discovered innocent people were also tortured and killed by vigilante groups (Elechi 2003:15).

Notwithstanding the acclaim people give the vigilante groups, people still express mixed reactions when they see the arbitrariness and brutality of the vigilante groups. Human Rights Watch and Centre for Law Enforcement, Education in Nigeria (2002), captured people's reactions towards the vigilante groups in the following words: "People's tolerance of vigilante groups is very high. It is frightening, even among reasonable people. They complain about extrajudicial executions, yet they support the retention of the organisation".

In this situation, it would seem the people are helpless over the activities of the vigilante groups. People in various communities; seem caught in a web of either dismissing the vigilante operations and facing the wrath of the perpetrators of criminality or keeping the vigilante groups and bearing their excesses and abuses. Igbokwe

vigilante groups and bearing their excesses and abuses. Igbokwe (2002) observed that the traditional distinction between the criminals and the vigilante has blurred so much that both have now become almost indistinguishable. Both now according to him, instill knee-bucking fear and nervousness in citizens. Igbokwe maintained that the vigilante committees have become veritable pools from which guns for hire are drawn to unleash mayhem and intimidation on the people. Igbokwe argued that the vigilante committees are irresponsible parallel security columns that degenerate fast into monsters that spare no one.

Enhancing the Services of the Vigilante Groups

Adejoh (2013) noted that the emergence and proliferation of community based vigilante security groups at local and state levels across Nigeria is due to the general air of insecurity and the low performance of the conventional police. In other words, these structures emerged to fill an unmet need. Enhancing the services of these groups, and making them more effective, would only serve to improve safety and security for the community and its dwellers. Baker (2002), admitted that in many regions of Nigeria, parallel organisations and vigilante groups have proved more effective in combating crime. He therefore submitted that in order to enhance the services of these groups, the police must recognise the need to show greater understanding and appreciation of the useful and positive role the groups could play in the maintenance of law and order. Cooperation between the police and the vigilante groups therefore would be a serious morale booster to the vigilante groups.

Bureau of Justice Assistance (1994) noted this when it stated that cooperative problem solving reinforces trust, facilitates the exchange of information and leads to the identification of other areas that could benefit the society in the fight against crime.

Adejoh (2013), remarked that the vigilante group members in most places relied heavily on charms and voodoo, while few of them had matchets, bows and arrows, and locally made guns and double barrel guns. He indicated that if proper security is to be ensured from the groups, there is need to provide the groups with better arms and give the members required training. The Justice for All Group (2012), noted that in order to improve the overall performance of the vigilante groups, constant technical support and funding must be given the group to enhance the knowledge of its members on crime prevention. Justice for All Group also emphasised that relevant information about the growing trend and sophistication in crime including, but not limited to the overall direction of crime prevention and policing; observance of guidelines on human rights and policing must be given to the vigilante groups in the course of their training. Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) stated that the meager remuneration paid to the vigilante groups has been one of the factors limiting the effectiveness of the groups in their security services. They maintained that the meager remuneration may provide a temptation to engage in (more lucrative) criminal activities, as well as deter good men from entering the service. Knowland (2014), observed that in Mexico, certain vigilante groups that started by helping out in countering kidnapping and drug dealing sometimes

deviated into drug dealing and exportation themselves; due to lack of adequate remuneration. Therefore, the vigilante groups should be well paid, in order to motivate them to combat crime. Justice for All Group (2012), would maintain that even though vigilante services properly understood should be voluntary, yet there should be some measure of reward and welfare to the members which should serve as an incentive and a motivation to enhance their services.

Methodology

The study employed the cross-sectional survey design. The target population for the study included male and female adults from 18years and above who were resident in Anambra State. The study covered the three senatorial zones of Anambra State where two Local Government Areas were selected from each of the three senatorial zones. The six Local Government Areas selected were; Onitsha South, Awka North, Nnewi North, Idemili North, Oyi and Ekwusigo Local Governments. The sample size comprised 540 respondents who were purposefully sampled and administered with the structured questionnaire.

Also, 48 participants were sampled for six sessions of Focused Group Discussion (FGD). The quantitative data were sorted, coded and analyzed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, while the qualitative data were analyzed using the theme-based method of content analysis. The study hypotheses were tested using Chi-Square inferential statistics.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Variable	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	263	48.7
Female	277	51.3
Total	**540**	**100.0**
Age range		
18-39	373	69.1
40-61	159	29.4
62 and above	8	1.5
Total	**540**	**100.0**
Mean Age		*35*
Marital Status		
Married	272	50.4
Single	236	43.7
Divorced	10	1.9
Separated	11	2.0
Widowed	11	2.0
Total	**540**	**100.0**

Educational attainment	*Frequency*	*Percentage (%)*
Primary education	44	8.1
Secondary education	236	43.7
Tertiary education	234	43.3
No formal education	26	4.9
Total	**540**	**100.0**
Age range		
18-39	373	69.1
40-61	159	29.4
62 and above	8	1.5
Total	**540**	**100.0**
Religious affiliation		
Christian	523	96.9
Moslem	8	1.5
Traditionalist	9	1.6
Total	**540**	**100.0**
Occupational status		
Civil servant	146	27.0
Trader	175	32.4
Student	170	31.5
Farmer	19	3.5
Other	30	5.6
Total	**540**	**100.0**

Place of residence		
Urban	296	54.8
Rural	244	45.2
Total	**540**	**100.0**
Duration of residence in an area.		
Below 2yrs.	111	20.5
5-10yrs	116	21.5
11-15yrs	89	61.5
16yrs and above	224	41.5
Total	**540**	**100.0**

Table 1 show that 48.7% of the respondents are males while 51.3% are females. On the age distribution, 69.1% of the respondents fall within the age range of 18-39 years, while 29.4% fall within the age bracket of 40-61 years while 1.5% of them are above 62 years of age. The mean age of the respondents is 35. On the marital status of the respondents, the table shows that 50.4% of the respondents were married, 43.7% were single, 1.9% of the respondents were divorced, and 2.0% were separated while 2.0% were widowed. On the educational attainment of the respondents, the table shows that 8.1% of them attained up to primary education, 43.7% attained up to secondary school education, 43.3% attained up to tertiary level of education while 4.9% had no formal education.

On the religious affiliation of the respondents, the table shows that a very great percentage of 96.9% of the respondents were Christians,

1.5% of them were Muslims and 1.6% of them are traditionalists. This distribution is not surprising because of the thick concentration of Christians within the areas of study. On the occupational status of the respondents, the table shows that 27.0% are civil servants, 32.4% are traders, 31.5% are students, and 3.5% are farmers while 5.6% are of other fields of work. On the place of residence, the table shows 54.8% of the respondents are dwelling in the urban areas of the state while 45.2 % are living in the rural areas of the state. Finally, on the duration the respondents have lived in their areas, the table shows that 20.5% have been resident for less than 2years in their area, 21.5% have been resident in their areas for a period between 5-10 years, and 16.5% have been resident in their areas for a period between 11-15 years while 41.5% have been resident in their areas for more than 16years.

Research Objective I: To ascertain the perceived problems confronting Vigilante Groups in Anambra State.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents on the major challenges facing the Vigilante Members

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Variable	Frequency	Percentage %
Insufficient fund for their activities	165	30.6
Lack of adequate training	253	46.9
Lack of public confidence	74	13.7
Lack of police support	43	8.0
Any other	5	0.9
Total	**540**	**100.0**

Table 2 shows that 30.6% of the respondents have the view that the major challenge confronting the vigilante group members is insufficient fund for their activities. 46.9% of the respondents hold the opinion that it is lack of adequate training. 13.7% of the respondents are of the opinion that it is lack of public confidence. 8.0% of the respondents have the opinion that it is lack of police support, while 0.9% of the respondents hold the view that there are other factors militating against the members of the vigilante groups such as enough outfit for all of them, and other such things as rain coat, boots, touch light. The table shows that the majority opinion is true, that the major challenge the vigilante groups have in the state is lack of adequate training. This finding is in agreement with the qualitative data of the study. The Focused Group Discussion sessions in all the areas of this study observed the same key

problem. In Ekwusigo LGA, the FGD participants stated that,
It won't be said that the vigilante members are not trained, but it is obvious they are not adequately trained. Without training they cannot be paid very well and they cannot offer the best required of them. Indeed, training is all they require to key in properly into public service and the best will be seen of them (FGD, Ekwusigo L.G.A).

The findings from this study agree with the findings of earlier studies on the subject. In separate studies, Olaniyi (2005) and Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) noted the consequences of lack of education. Olaniyi highlighted the danger of untrained citizens operating as security agents without defined structure or commands acting outside the structure of law to enforce law and order. Alemika and Chukwuma also identified lack of proper training as one of the key problems of vigilante groups.

Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents on whether loyalty to political stalwarts deviate the attention of the Vigilante Group Members from their work

Response	Frequency	Percentage %
True	309	57.2
False	231	42.8
Total	540	100.0

Table 3 shows that 57.2% of the respondents have the opinion that loyalty to political stalwarts in a community deviates the attention

of the vigilante members in their security services. Only 42.8% of the respondents have a contrary view. This implies that the opinion of the majority of the respondents is true that the vigilante group members align themselves with the political stalwarts. This finding is in tandem with the findings of the qualitative data of the study. At the Focused Group Discussion sessions, the participants admitted that vigilante group members could easily align themselves with political stalwarts for reasons of financial benefits. In Nnewi North LGA the participants at the FGD session agreed that,

The vigilante group members in our community sometimes may identify with political stalwarts in the community because they always look forward to getting some monetary rewards. They may be used in some situations to victimise political opponents. (FGD, Nnewi North L.G.A).

This finding agrees with those of earlier studies on the subject. For example, Elechi (2003) and Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) observed the implication of vigilante members partner-shipping with political stalwarts. Elechi noted that powerful politicians have hijacked the vigilante outfit and used them to threaten torture and murder political opponents, while Alemika and Chukwuma observed that the tendency of vigilante group members aligning themselves with political stalwarts betrays the truth about their commitment to duty.

Cross-tabulation: Place of Residence and major challenges confronting the V.G Members.

Table 4: Distribution of Respondents by Place of Residence and major challenges confronting the Vigilante Group Members

Area of Residence	Major challenges confronting the V.G members.							
	Insufficient Total fund for their activities	Lack of adequate training	Lack of public confidence	Lack of police support	Others	X^2	Df	P value
Urban Area	64 296	141	56	31	4	**36.663**	**4**	**0.001**
	(21.6) (100.0)	(47.6)	(18.9)	(10.5)	(1.4)			
Rural Area	101 244	121	18	12	1			
	(41.4) (100.0)	(45.9)	(7.4)	(4.9)	(.4)			
Total	165 540	253	74	43	5			
	(30.6) (100.0)	(46.9)	(13.7)	(8.0)	(9)			

Table 4 above shows that most respondents, (47.6%) who dwell in the urban areas of Anambra state believe that the major challenge

confronting the vigilante group members is lack of adequate training. Most other respondents who live in the rural areas of the state have the same opinion. However, slightly more respondents (41.4%) in the rural areas of the state believe rather that the major challenge confronting the vigilante members is insufficient fund for their activities, in comparison to respondents in the other categories. Statistically however, there is a significant relationship ($p = 0.001$) in respondents' perception on how the community members perceive the challenges confronting the vigilante group members.

With respect to study aim 1, which is "To ascertain the problems confronting vigilante groups in crime control in Anambra State", it can be said that:

- The vigilante members lack adequate training.
- Loyalty to political stalwarts can deviate their attention from their duty.

The findings indicate some of the problems the vigilante members in the State experience which militate against their functioning competently, major of which is lack of adequate training.

Research Objective 2: To examine public reaction to the continual use of Vigilante Groups for Crime control in Anambra State.

Figure 1: Distribution of Respondents on whether Community Members are uniformly agreed to the use of Vigilante Group in crime control.
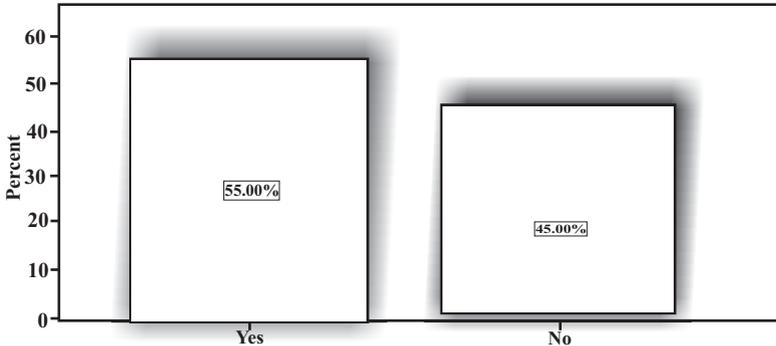
Figure 1 above shows that 55.0% of the respondents are of the opinion that members of their communities agree on the use of vigilante groups for crime control, while 45.0% of the respondents in the contrary hold the opinion that members of their communities are not uniformly agreed on the use of the vigilante groups for crime control. This implies that a greater number of community members of the state are at home with the use of the vigilante groups for crime control in the state. This finding is in agreement with the qualitative data of the study. The Focused Group Discussion sessions indicate that the participants appreciate the services of the vigilante groups. In Nnewi North LGA, at the FGD session, the view was expressed that:

Some years ago our people were not so much at home with the services of the vigilante groups because they were exploiting everybody and were not accountable for their excesses. But today, the members of the group are ready to do their work even with very little pay they receive; and as such our people wholesomely accommodate them and relate well with them. (FGD, Nnewi North L.G.A).

The findings of both quantitative and qualitative data of the study are at variance with the findings of earlier studies on the subject. For instance, in separate studies, Marx and Acher (1999) and Minnar (2001) showed that citizens of a community do not always agree on the vigilante members. Marx and Acher (1999) indicated that even in areas where people seem generally united in their recognition of law enforcement problems, opinions are often divided over the appropriateness of vigilante solutions. Minnar also established that not all residents in a community are supportive of vigilante operations.

With respect to study aim 2, which is "To examine public reaction to the continual use of vigilante groups for crime control in Anambra State", it can be said that:

- Members of the public do not uniformly agree on the use of vigilante members in crime control, because the vigilante members can victimise the innocent people as well.

The finding indicates that even though not all the members of the public are comfortable with the continual use of vigilante members for crime control in the State, greater majority of the citizens are at home with their services.

Research Objective 3: To identify ways by which the services of the Vigilante Groups in Anambra State can be enhanced.

Figure 2: Distribution of respondents on the best way to enhance the services of the vigilante groups.
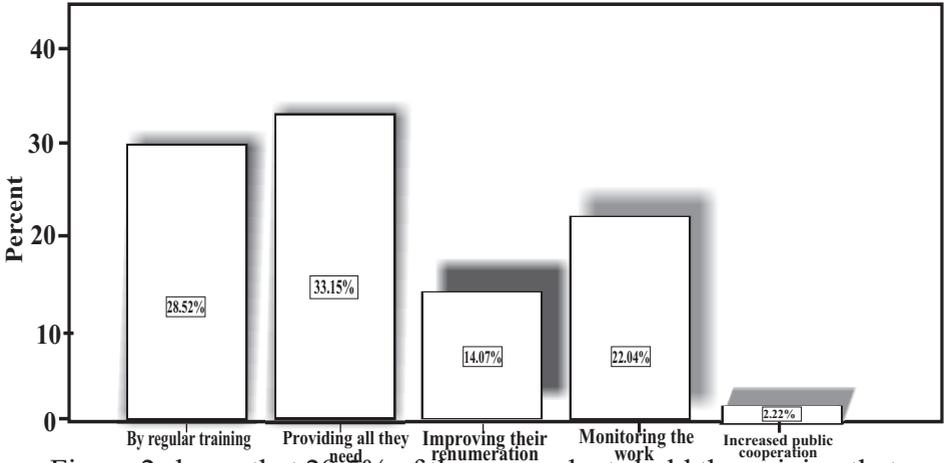
Figure 2 shows that 28.5% of the respondents hold the opinion that the best way to enhance the services of the vigilante group members is to offer them regular training. While 33.2% of the respondents hold the opinion that it is by providing all they need, 14.1% believe that the best way to enhance the vigilante groups is to improve their remunerations. Unlike these, 22.0% hold the view that the services of the vigilante groups can be enhanced by monitoring their work. Finally, 2.2% have the view that increase in public cooperation can help to improve the services of the vigilante groups. This implies that the majority opinion is true, that providing the vigilante members all they need will improve their services. The qualitative data of the study is in agreement with this finding. At all the Focused Group Discussion sessions, the participants generally affirmed that what should contribute most in enhancing the services of the vigilante groups is giving them proper training, paying them very well and providing all other things that will help them do their work

well. At FGD session in Oyi LGA for example, the participants said;
The vigilante group members will never be of much use to the society until they undergo proper training. Indeed, the society needs trained and enlightened people to take over security services in the state if the problem of insecurity will ever be solved. However, training them goes with providing every other necessity to assist them do the work properly. It is on this basis that they will earn adequate payment and gain respect from the public. (FGD, Oyi L.G.A).

The findings of both quantitative and qualitative data agree with those of earlier studies on the subject. For instance, Justice for All Group (2012) and Adejoh (2013) noted that the vigilante members will function better when their needs for security are provided. Justice for All Group holds that constant technical support and funding must be given to enhance the knowledge of the vigilante members on crime prevention so as to enable them operate very well. Adejoh equally maintains that if proper security is to be ensured from the vigilante groups, there is need to provide them with better arms and give the members required training.

With respect to study aim 3, which is "To identify ways by which the services of vigilante groups in Anambra State can be enhanced", it can be said: that

- Provision of the basic needs of the vigilante members in terms of adequate training, adequate remuneration and other equipment for their services, will boost the quality of service the vigilante render

the society.

The finding indicates that the vigilante groups can be enabled to enhance their services by providing the basic things they need to assist their work.

Discussion of Findings

The vigilante groups are statutory establishment in Anambra State which was set up by the law of House of Assembly of the State. It is a welcomed security outfit in the State in that the citizens of the State are objectively at home with the outfit and often avail themselves of the services of the group. However the groups have their areas of strength and weaknesses. This study has been able to identify some of the factors that indicate the strength and weaknesses of the vigilante groups in the State.

In relation to the first specific aim of this study, on the major challenges or problems facing the vigilante groups in Anambra State, it was shown that lack of adequate training is a major setback and a challenge confronting the vigilante members of the State. These findings found support on earlier studies on the subject. Olaniyi (2005) and Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) in separate studies showed the consequences of lack of adequate education to security operatives.

The study again showed that loyalty to political stalwarts in the State could also be a setback to the vigilante members. These findings are in accord with earlier findings on the subject. Elechi (2003) and Alemika and Chukwuma (2003) in separate studies, observed the implications of vigilante members submitting their loyalty to

political stalwarts. The tendency of vigilante group members to align themselves with the powerful politicians and with the mind of deriving monetary benefits can be explained from the perspective of strain theory. This is in agreement with Merton's observation, that members of the society are placed in different positions in the social structure, and effort to attain the expected position in the society could generate deviance.

In relation to the second specific objective of the study, it was found out that even though the citizens of the State are not uniformly in agreement with the continual use of the vigilante groups for crime control in the State, yet majority of the citizens are at home with their services. This could be as a result of the incompetence of the conventional Police and their brutality. These findings are however, not in agreement with the findings of earlier studies on the subject. In separate studies, Marx and Acher (1999) and Minnar (2001) showed that citizens of a community do not always agree on the vigilante members. Equally, Elechi (2003) in his own study, observed that even though people hailed the vigilante operations, but with time people despised them when they discovered that innocent people were also tortured and killed by vigilante groups.

Finally, in relation to the third specific objective of the study, it was found out that the activities of the vigilante groups in the state can be enhanced in order to improve their performance. On the best way to enhance the performance of the vigilante members, it was found out that providing all their basic needs will enable them to be more focused and committed to security services. This finding was

corroborated by the findings of earlier studies on the subject. In separate studies, Justice for All Group (2012) and Adejoh (2013) noted that the vigilante members will function better when their needs for security are provided.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the researcher put forward the following recommendations:

1. There should be a provision for funding, training and welfare of the members of the vigilante group to avoid the same situations that gave rise to public loss of confidence in the police force.

2. The vigilante groups should also be trained on how to handle complex weapons as the ones the Nigerian police force use, since it is the same type of criminals that both the police force and vigilante groups fight. Besides training on handling sophisticated weapons, the vigilante members should equally be adequately trained on modern security measure.

3. There should also be checks in the mental capacity of the recruited members of the vigilante service. This would ensure that the recruited members of the group are mentally balanced to handle weapons in order to ascertain that they don't become threats to the well-being of the members of the society.

4. To assist the community vigilante groups, the State government should provide more motorbikes for use in each community as well as enough security vans.

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