NON-CONVENTIONAL POLICE GROUPS AND CRIME MANAGEMENT IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

OMIAYE Lewis Ajakpovi
Department of Sociology, Faculty of the Social Sciences,
Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria
lomiaye@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

The study was designed to examine the roles of non-conventional police groups and crime management in Delta State, Nigeria. The study examined the roles of vigilante groups, community watch groups, youth patrol groups, and traditional security groups in managing crime, and explored the associations between these groups' activities and four key security outcomes: crime rate reduction, residents' sense of safety, deterrence of criminal behaviour, and speed of response to security threats. The study employed the descriptive research design and sampled 400 respondents through the use of questionnaires administered in selected communities in Delta State. Quantitative data method was used for data analysis. Based on the findings, the study revealed that the operational presence of vigilante groups, community watch groups, youth patrol groups, and traditional security structures in Delta State is significantly associated with perceived reductions in crime rates. The study also identified various challenges such as inadequate funding and training, hostility from criminals, and legal restrictions; all produced statistically significant associations with negative security outcomes. Delta State Government and relevant security agencies should establish a structured and adequately funded training programme for all categories of non-conventional police groups. The Federal government should also provide dedicated budgetary allocations for the operational funding of non-conventional police groups, including provision of modern communication equipment, patrol vehicles, protective gear, and stipends for operatives. The study provides useful information that can assist policymakers, security agencies, researchers, and community leaders in designing effective community policing and crime prevention strategies.

Keywords: Community policing; Crime management; Delta State; Non-conventional police group, Vigilante groups.

INTRODUCTION

Crime has been a major subject of concern in many societies across the globe. In as much as no nation exists without crime, it is obvious that making a country safer and more peaceful is imperative for the meaningful progress of any society. The police are saddled with the responsibilities of crime control in all countries of the world. Such duties include crime detection and prevention, apprehension of offenders, the preservation of law and order as well as protection of lives and properties. The police also ensure due enforcement of all laws and regulations in a country. In other words, the provision of adequate security is a social prerequisite for the survival of any society. Every society takes appropriate measures to protect the lives and property of people living within its boundaries because the success of any business or social activity depends on security. In this regard, societies from time immemorial made efforts to police their neighborhoods in order to secure them from criminal victimization. This follows the fact that insecurity impacts negatively on all citizens through loss of properties,

life, or loss of confidence from fear of violence (Sani, 2025; Agbamu, 2024). It is against this backdrop that the delivery of safety and security is considered a justifiable public good and the very essence of the state. Thus, the government in every society through the police takes appropriate measures to protect the lives and property of people living within its boundaries. (Sani 2025), Thus, one function that makes the Nigerian Police Force a dependable part of the Nigerian criminal justice system is crime management (Sani 2025). This function is executed largely through effective crime management through the detection, control, and prevention of crime.

Crime management is becoming a serious challenge confronting the Nigeria Police Force. There are indications that the police who are the primary agent in the fight in recent years, have been overwhelmed with the increase in crime rate. This led to the reliance on non-conventional police for security of lives and property at community levels. The rise of non-state security actors in Nigeria can be attributed to the police's inability to sufficiently ensure security, maintain law and order, and dispense justice in society (Onuoha, 2017). These groups, often known as "vigilante associations" or "local security outfits," which are formed by community members who take it upon themselves to maintain law and order in the absence of adequate law enforcement presence or perceived inefficiencies of the formal security apparatus. In some quarters, community vigilante groups and other neighbourhoods watch have been appraised to be recording success in crime control and prevention. It is becoming a common knowledge that some communities are now engaging vigilante groups for security purposes and as an important outfit to complement the State law enforcement agencies. That is why, Irogbo and Agbamu (2023) advocate the need for collaboration between traditional and formal law enforcement institutions to foster a united front against multifaceted security issues.

The Community policing (Non-conventional police) has emerged as an essential approach to maintaining law and order in many countries, including Nigeria. Nigeria has been grappling with various security challenges, such as armed robbery, kidnapping, communal clashes, cult-related violence, and herdsmen attacks. To combat these issues, local vigilante groups have been established in several communities to supplement the efforts of the police and provide security at the grassroots level. (Nweke & Nwankwo 2023). However, the effectiveness and sustainability of these local vigilante groups have come under scrutiny, necessitating a comprehensive examination of their role in community policing. There are several vigilante groups existing in Nigeria. The South East governors of Nigeria recently unveiled a citizens' driven security outfit they code named "Ebube Agu" which in Igbo Language, literally means the 'fear of the lion'. With operational base in Enugu, South East of Nigeria, the security outfit is charged with the responsibility of overseeing and coordinating the activities of vigilante outfits across the five eastern states. The governors explained that the security outfit will be under the direct operational supervision of the Nigeria police. Abiodun (2021), reported that "Ebube Agu" is charged with creating awareness, intelligence gathering, become a source of security alarm, exchange intelligence in seamless manner, checkmate crime in the eastern states, mitigate attacks on communities and prevent loss of lives and properties. "Amotekun", the Southwest security outfit was established by the governors of the south west states of Nigeria on the 19th January 2020. The personnel of 'Amotekun' security outfit are largely local hunters from the various communities to combat terrorism, incidences of kidnapping, banditry, farmers-herders clashes and other violent criminal activities in the western region. The PM News (2020), reported that the security outfit according to Dr. Kayode Fayemi, the Governor of Ekiti State and the Chairman of Nigeria's Governors Forum (NGF), is nothing but a kind of community policing response to the security challenges and confidence building strategy of the people of the south west. The "Amotekun" corps in each of the south west states, are designed to operate as separate entities but to collaborate with one another in intelligence sharing and; meeting quarterly to compare notes. The corps are also to collaborate

with and also assist the Police and other security outfits in intelligence gathering and the maintenance of law and order. In Benue state, north central of Nigeria, the community volunteer guards, a community security outfit was established to assist in curbing the continued attacks of Benue people in the state by herdsmen. Tule (2021), quoting the state governor, Samuel Ortom, reported that the volunteer guards will not work at cross purposes with conventional security agencies but operationally collaborate with them.

The emergence of the Civilian Joint Task Force was occasioned by the need to offer a counter force to the violent attacks of "Boko haram" insurgents in the north east of Nigeria. Bamidele (2017) stated that the Civilian Joint Task Force is made up of a group of youths who are desirous of safe guarding their communities from the violent attacks of insurgents. The security outfits according to the study are driven by citizens' participation. Hong Kong and Taiwan according to the study also have a robust, well developed modern auxiliary police system that is community based. Nigeria should take a cue from the China example to strengthen her security architecture.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Nigeria's security situation has steadily deteriorated in recent years, with banditry, herdsmen attacks, kidnapping, insurgency, terrorism, and other social crimes spreading across all parts of the country. This heightened insecurity has severely impacted investment flows and the food supply chain. The ongoing security crisis has particularly hampered food production, stalling growth in the agricultural sector. While issues like climate change and environmental degradation contribute to reduced productivity, insecurity remains the most pressing challenge for the sector. Farmers, including those in the southern regions, report frequent attacks on their farms by herdsmen. Tragically, many farmers have been killed while attempting to prevent herdsmen from destroying their crops, leaving others too fearful to work their land. According to the Crime Experience and Security Perception Survey by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), (NBS CESP Survey 2024), an estimated 51.89 million crime incidents were recorded across Nigerian households between May 2023 and April 2024. The report revealed that the North-West region recorded the highest number of crime incidents, with 14.4 million cases, followed by the North-Central region, with 8.8 million cases. In contrast, the Southeast reported the lowest incidence of crime, with 6.18 million cases. The findings further indicated that rural areas were more affected by crime than urban areas, with 26.53 million incidents occurring in rural households compared to 25.36 million incidents in urban areas. The survey also underscored the severity of kidnapping in Nigeria, reporting that 4.14 million households experienced home robbery. Additionally, Nigerians paid a staggering N2.23 trillion in ransom between May 2023 and April 2024 (NBS CESP Survey, 2024).

Despite the establishment of formal police structures in Delta state, citizens continue to experience theft, cultism, and youth violence. In response, local residents have developed non-conventional security initiatives to fill the gap. However, there are limited scholarly research on the effectiveness, structure, and challenges of these local policing officers.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following null hypotheses are formulated for the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between the activities of non-conventional police groups and crime management in Delta state.
2. Non-conventional police groups do not significantly contribute to crime control in Delta state.
3. There is no significant difference in crime management outcomes between communities with non-conventional police groups and those without non-conventional police group in Delta state.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Causes of the security challenges in Nigeria

At the most proximate and indisputable level, terrorism and insurgency are the most fundamental causes of the insecurity in Nigeria in recent time (Edo & Ba-Ana- Itenebe, 2022). Other leading causes of insecurity in Nigeria include the increasing rate of crimes such as armed robbery, banditry, kidnappings for ransom, Fulani marauders, ritual killings, piracy in the Niger Delta region and along the Gulf of Guinea, and attacks from unknown gunmen in South Eastern Nigeria. Irogbo 2024, who studied conflict and insecurity in the Niger Delta region reveled that there is prevalence of human right violation, arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, and restrictions freedom of speech. Ayodeji, Olutayo, Abimbola and Saheed (2018) argued that states like Nigeria and as it has always been before independence, insecurity remains a major challenge to the government and the citizens. Unlike what is obtained in the pre-independence era, insecurity has escalated partly because of the diverse nature of the country, the people and the problems of nation-building (Ikenyei 2017). With the end of the prolonged military intervention in politics in Nigeria, the exercise of freedom associated with civil rule; bottled-up problems and repression of the past years were freely given expression resulting in several crises and conflicts ranging from ethnic, economic, political to religion conflicts (Ayodeji *et al*, 2018 and Ikenyei 2020).

Consequences of the Security Challenges in Nigeria

The undefeated insecurity situation in the country has become a part of the country and the end to it seems to have no end yet. The continued negative impact of insecurity in the country has heightened the fears that the country is heading towards a failed-state rather than a failing-state that it has been tagged by the international community, observers and scholars a like Ikenyei and Akpotor (2020). Business environment and business flow into the country have been impacted negatively. Huge budgetary allocations to defense, security votes and money collected from excess crude account without legislative approval are yet to solve the problem of insecurity in the country. This scenario has bedeviled the country's socio-political and economic development amidst abundance of human and natural resources and huge military presence in the northeast and other geopolitical zones (Gideon, 2021). The worsening insecurity has impacted negatively, not only on economic and infrastructure development, but also on the country's socio-political development. Foreign direct investment (FDI) is also in the decline following the changing patterns of the security challenges, namely Boko Haram, ISWAP, banditry, Fulani herdsmen attacks, armed robbery, kidnapping, among others (Ikenyei (2017). The sophistication adopted in the pursuit of the unaccepted behaviours of these non-state actors has complicated the porous security situation in Nigeria. In spite of government counter responses to these security challenges, they seem to be unabated, and in the increase on a daily basis, and in several parts of the country.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) North-East Nigeria

Due to frustration with the government's counterinsurgency operations (Oyewole, 2020: 363; Sampson, 2015), in June 2013 around 500 residents of Maiduguri came together in a self-organised group called the Yan Gora, which later became known as the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF). It was named CJTF after the Special Joint Task Force stationed at Maiduguri, comprised of the military, police and other security agencies and mandated to neutralise the Boko Haram threat (Sampson, 2015). Over time, this spontaneous group, primarily comprising untrained youths as well as older members, and armed with machetes, bows and arrows, has effectively expelled Boko Haram from Maiduguri (Ikenyei& Lawal 2019). The CJTF attracted members from diverse backgrounds and regions, including individuals with various professions, such as traders, drivers, farmers, vigilantes, hunters and students, spanning from 19 to over 50 years of age (Agbiboa, 2020: 365).

Western Nigeria Security Network (Amotekun) in South-West

The Western Nigeria Security Network (WNSN) otherwise called Amotekun means Leopard, the six south west governors used the cat-like animal as a code name to establish and launched operation Amotekun security outfit to complement the efforts of the police and fill in the existing performance gap. Operation Amotekun was launched on Thursday, January 9, 2020 with glee, merriment and exultation in Ibadan by the South West governors, leaders and youths across the region to fight crime and intruders, contrary to criticism. Amotekun security outfit would not amount to duplication of existing security agencies. Amotekun security outfit is to work in tandem with the police, it is teamwork. They are going to work directly with the police and other security agencies within the concept of community policing. Amotekun is a joint patrol to complement the effort of the police. The need to provide security and welfare of the citizenry of the region led to the formation of the outfit. Amotekun is meant to take policing close to the people in the different communities. (Dojumo, 2020). The South West security outfit code- named Amotekun was put together as an agency to take decisive steps to stem the spate of killings and various crimes, including insurgency, herdsmen killings, kidnapping, robbery and rape of women. It becomes open indication that the Buhari Administration cannot guarantee security of lives and property. Moreso, the Buhari administration had failed to prosecute the mastermind of the mass killings in Benue, Nassarawa, Bauchi, Taraba, Kogi, Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Zamfara, Kaduna, Ekiti, Enugu and other parts of the country. Amotekun security outfit was a courage taken by South West leaders and people to protect themselves and their region from criminals and intruders. (Kola Ologbondiyan, 2020, p.11).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK - The Broken Window Theory (BWT)

The Broken Window Theory (BWT) first propounded by Wilson and Kelling (1982) and advanced by Kelling and Coles (1998) is adopted by this paper in the assessment of non-conventional policing and security in Nigeria. The theory propounds "that there is direct connection between the appearance of disorder and actual crime" (Giddens, 2004:214). Giddens (2004) as well as Haralambos and Holborn (2007) explained that when a single broken window is left unrepaired in a neighborhood, literarily when minor offenses like drunkenness, prostitution, pickpocketing among others are ignored, it sends a message to potential offenders that neither the police nor local residents care about maintaining order in the community. Over time, these neglected offenses lead to more visible signs of disorder, such as vandalism and abandoned vehicles. As minor crimes are continuously overlooked, they can escalate into more serious offenses like rape, fraud, burglary, kidnapping, banditry, and even assassinations. The Broken Windows theory suggests that if minor disorder is ignored and not addressed, it can result to a reduction in fear of crime and informal social control, ultimately resulting in an increase in crime. Police departments have embraced this theory on the belief that by managing minor disorders, they can reduce more serious crimes.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive research design and sampled 400 respondents with the use of a well-structured questionnaire to collect the opinion of the respondents on the activities of the non-conventional police groups from selected communities in Delta State. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze demographic data while Chi-square statistical technique was used to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences version 27.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

Sex Distribution of Respondents

Table 1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	236	59.9%
Female	158	40.1%
Total	394	100%

Source: Author' field survey, 2026

The data presented in table 1 show that 59.9% of respondents were males and 40.1% females. This means that the sex representation is highly represented.

Age Distribution of Respondents

Table 2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Range (years)	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Below 20	42	10.6%
21 – 30	122	31.0%
31 - 40	136	34.5%
41 – 50	66	16.8%
51 and Above	28	7.1%
Total	394	100%

Source: Author' field survey 2026

As presented in the table 2, the largest group of respondents comprised of those who were in the age group of 31-40 years (34.5%). The results indicate that the research study had captured a good number of respondents from different age groups which is important

Educational Qualification of Respondents

The educational background of respondents provides an understanding of their literacy level, which may influence their perception on Non-conventional police groups and crime management in Delta State.

Table 3: Educational Qualification of Respondents

Educational Level	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
No formal Education	36	9.1%
Primary Education	58	14.7%
Secondary Education	184	46.7%
Tertiary Education	116	29.5%
Total	394	100%

Source: Author' field survey 2026

The findings in table 3 revealed that majority of the respondents are literate. Occupation of Respondents

The occupation status of respondents was analyzed to determine their economic engagement and potential exposure to crime management experiences.

Table 4: Occupation of Respondents

Occupation	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Civil Servant	51	12.9%
Trader	127	32.2%
Student	74	18.8%
Artisan	66	16.8%
Farmer	54	13.7%
Others	22	5.6%
Total	394	100%

Source: Author' field survey 2026

As indicated in the table 4 the highest proportion of respondents (32.2%) were traders, followed by students (18.8%), while others (5.6%) is the lowest respondents. This occupational diversity ensures that prospections from different sectors were incorporated into the study.

Years of Residence in Delta State

The years of residency was assessed to determine how long respondents had lived in Delta State and their familiarity with non-conventional police groups and their policing strategies in Delta State.

Table 5: Years of Residence in Delta State

Years of Residency	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Below 5 years	54	13.7%
5 – 10 years	118	29.9%
11 – 15 years	130	33.0%
16 years and Above	92	23.4%
Total	394	100%

Source: Author' field survey 2026

The table 5 reveals that respondent whom had lived in the Delta State for 11 – 15 years formed the majority with 33.0%, followed by respondents who had stayed for 5 – 10 years represent 29.9%, while those who lived below 5 years 13.7% have the lowest. This suggests that most respondent had lived long enough in Delta State to provide reliable information concerning activities of non-conventional police groups relating to crime management in the state

TEST OF STUDY HYPOTHESES

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between the activities on non- conventional police groups and crime prevention in Delta State.

Table 6: Analysis of Chi-square on the roles of non-conventional police groups in crime management in Delta State

Test statistic	Calculated value	df	Critical value (0.05)	Decision	Conclusion
Chi-square	1,056.68	2	5.991	Reject Ho	There is a significant relationship between the activities of the non-conventional police groups and crime management in Delta State.

The results in the table 6 show the analysis of the chi-square on the significant relationship between the activities on non- conventional police groups and crime prevention in Delta State. From the table 6 theCalculated χ^2 (1056.68)is greater thanCritical Value (5.991**)** Therefore, there is a significance relationship between the activities of non-conventional police groups and crime prevention in Delta State. This implies that the activities of non-conventional police groups help in managing crime in Delta State.

Hypothesis 2: Non-conventional police groups do not significantly contribute to crime control in Delta state.

Table 7: Analysis of the roles of Non- conventional police groups in crime management in Delta State

Test statistic	Calculated value	df	Critical value (0.05)	Decision	Conclusion
Chi-square	814.20	2	5.991	Reject Ho	Non-conventional police groups significantly contribute to crime control in Delta State.

Since the calculated Chi-square value (814.20) is greater than the critical value (5.991), the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, non-conventional police groups make a significant contribution to crime control in Delta State

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between communities with non-conventional police groups and those without in Delta State.

Table 8: Analysis of the communities with non-conventional police groups and those without in Delta State.

Test statistic	Calculated value	df	Critical value (0.05)	Decision	Conclusion
Chi-square	1,001.90	2	5.991	Reject Ho	There is a significant difference between communities with non-conventional police groups and those without in Delta State.

Since the calculated Chi-Square value (952.91) is greater than the critical value (9.488), the null hypothesis is rejected. Hence, there is a statistically significant difference between communities that have non-conventional police groups and those that do not in Delta State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study was designed to examine the roles of non-conventional police groups and crime management in Delta State, Nigeria, in relation to extant literature. The findings of this study reveal that the operational presence of vigilante groups, community watch groups, youth patrol groups, and traditional security structures in Delta State is significantly associated with perceived reductions in crime rates. All cross-tabulation analyses against the crime reduction variable produced statistically significant Pearson Chi-Square values ($p < .001$), with community watch groups recording the highest value of $\chi^2 = 342.140$, underscoring the strength of these associations. This finding is broadly consistent with the position of Irogbo and Agbamu (2023), who stressed the role of vigilantes and traditional institution in crime control and Jack-Rabin (2023) who, in his study of vigilante groups and crime management in Calabar Metropolis, Cross River State, concluded that community vigilante groups in Nigeria have contributed immensely to crime prevention and management. Similarly, Abdulkadir (2023) assessed the impact of vigilante patrolling and community engagement on crime prevention in Dekina Local Government Area, Kogi State, and found that regular community patrols effectively deterred criminal activities, including kidnapping, by fostering collaboration between local communities and law enforcement agencies

According to the National Bureau of Statistics, (2024) crime incidents in Nigeria increased between 2019 and 2022, highlighting the need for stronger community-based security mechanisms. In Delta State, where kidnapping, cultism, and other forms of criminality remain concerns, the findings indicate that non-conventional security groups contribute significantly to crime control. Their local knowledge, community presence, and access to information complement the efforts of the Nigeria Police Force. This finding is consistent with previous studies, including Okoth's (2023) study in Nairobi, which showed that community policing and neighbourhood watch programmes can contribute to crime reduction. Overall, the findings suggest that active and visible community-based security structures can strengthen crime management when supported by effective collaboration with formal law enforcement agencies.

Among the four security outcome variables examined, the sense of safety felt by residents emerged as the dimension most powerfully associated with non-conventional police group activity. Community watch groups recorded the highest chi-square value in the entire study ($\chi^2 = 455.379$, $p < .001$) for their association with residents feeling safer, while youth

patrol groups (χ^2 = 359.896) and vigilante groups (χ^2 = 394.351) also recorded very strong associations with the same outcome. This is consistent with the findings of a CLEEN Foundation survey, (2022) which found that 68% of residents in vigilante-patrolled areas in Nigeria felt safer than those in areas dependent solely on the police. Omitola (2021) similarly argued that community and vigilante group policing in Africa emboldened cultural authority and communal interest in addressing security threats, creating not only objective deterrence but also a strong perception of safety among community members. Ajayi, (2022) writing in the African Journal of Informal Policing, described vigilante groups as predictive security agents whose transformative capacity in community policing stems largely from their embeddedness in the community a characteristic that allows them to project authority and reassurance in ways that conventional police, often seen as external actors, cannot easily replicate.

The finding that youth patrol groups have a strong association with residents' sense of safety (χ^2 = 359.896) indicates that their local presence contributes to community security. This supports Akinlabi and Ihemeje's (2021) finding that involving local actors, such as youth organizations, strengthens community crime prevention. The study also found significant relationships between non-conventional policing activities and crime deterrence. Vigilante groups (χ^2 = 292.497), community watch groups (χ^2 = 298.956), youth patrol groups (χ^2 = 255.914), and traditional security groups (χ^2 = 179.108) were significantly associated with deterrence. Similarly, street patrols, information sharing with the police, and assistance in apprehending suspects showed strong associations with deterrence. These findings support deterrence theory, which emphasizes the importance of visible and certain crime detection in discouraging criminal behaviour. They also agree with Abdulkadir's (2023) finding that community patrols contribute to crime deterrence through local presence and engagement.

A major finding of this study is the exceptionally strong association between formal police collaboration and security outcomes. The cross-tabulation of close working relationships with the Nigeria Police Force against crime reduction produced a chi-square value of 423.435 ($p < .001$), among the highest recorded in the study. Similarly, the hand-over of suspects (χ^2 = 288.258 against crime reduction), information provision to the police (χ^2 = 393.796 against crime reduction), and police support for crime-fighting efforts (χ^2 = 294.463 against crime reduction) all registered very strong associations. These results collectively highlight police-community security collaboration as the single most important structural enabler of positive security outcomes from nonconventional policing activity.

However, mutual respect between non-conventional groups and the police, although significant (χ^2 = 117.803–301.041), showed weaker associations than operational collaboration. This suggests that goodwill alone is insufficient and that formal partnerships involving joint operations, intelligence sharing, and clear responsibilities are necessary. The study also identified inadequate training (χ^2 = 583.244) and lack of funding (χ^2 = 518.305) as the major challenges to effective non-conventional policing. Other challenges included criminal hostility and legal restrictions. These findings agree with previous studies that identified inadequate funding, training, logistics, and institutional support as major barriers to community policing. Criminal hostility was significantly associated with reduced residents' safety (χ^2 = 424.182), while legal restrictions were also significant in relation to crime reduction (χ^2 = 351.230) and residents' sense of security (χ^2 = 378.143). Overall, the findings show that inadequate resources, threats from criminals, and legal limitations significantly reduce the effectiveness of non-conventional police groups in Delta State.

This finding suggests that while traditional structures retain their cultural legitimacy and continue to contribute to security governance in Delta State communities, their impact on specific measurable security outcomes may be attenuated relative to more formally organised non-conventional groups. This is consistent with Omitola (2021) argument that while community and vigilante policing structures rooted in cultural authority are valuable, their

effectiveness is often limited by the informality of their operational frameworks and their limited capacity for rapid, coordinated response to modern security threats. The Brookings Institution (2022) similarly observed that what characterises many vigilante and traditional security arrangements in Nigeria is a profound lack of accountability and operational standardization, which limits their systemic impact even when their cultural authority remains intact.

CONCLUSION

The study's results clearly indicate the significance of the involvement of alternative police organizations in crime control within the context of Delta State. The strong bond that alternative police organizations form with the local population, their knowledge about the region, and ability to acquire the relevant information give them a good chance to serve as partners in maintaining law and order. According to the findings, cooperation between community-driven security organizations and the Nigeria Police Force leads to improved crime management. The data revealed a strong correlation between the activities of non-conventional police organizations and crime management. Their crime prevention efforts are efficient. Model communities have reported success in crime management. The study concluded that non-conventional police groups play an important role in crime management in Delta State. Their close relationship with local communities, knowledge of the environment, and access to local information enable them to support the Nigeria Police Force in preventing and controlling crime. Effective collaboration between these groups and the formal police contributes significantly to improved community security. However, their effectiveness is limited by inadequate funding, equipment, training, motivation, and legal and institutional support. Therefore, greater government and stakeholder support through adequate funding, regular training, improved equipment, and stronger cooperation with the Nigeria Police Force is necessary to enhance their contribution to crime management in Delta State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In light of this study's results, the following suggestions are proposed:

1. The Delta State Government and relevant security authorities should provide regular and adequately funded training for all categories of non-conventional police groups.
2. The Delta State House of Assembly should enact appropriate laws to clearly define the roles, powers, protection, and accountability of non-conventional police groups.
3. The Nigeria Police Force in Delta State should strengthen formal collaboration with vigilante groups, community watch groups, youth patrols, and traditional security structures through joint patrols, intelligence sharing, and proper suspect-handover procedures.
4. The Federal and State Governments should provide adequate funding, communication equipment, patrol vehicles, protective gear, and other necessary operational support for non-conventional police groups.
5. Community stakeholders, local governments, and civil society organizations should provide support systems to protect and encourage non-conventional police operatives facing threats and hostility from criminals.

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