Developing accountable security institutions: Assessing the roles of the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) in controlling the trend of kidnapping in Anambra, Nigeria.

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Abstract

This study assessed the roles of the NPF in controlling kidnapping trend in Anambra State. Using mixed-method research design, a sample of 394 respondents was selected through the proportionate sampling technique. A researcher-developed questionnaire was used to gather the quantitative data which was complemented by data obtained through In-Depth Interview (IDI) conducted with selected stakeholders in the study area. Quantitative data collected were analysed descriptively using frequency counts and percentages; while the qualitative data were analysed by method of manual content analysis. Findings of the study showed among others, that the police played varying roles in controlling kidnapping in Anambra State. The most significant among such roles included: educating the public on security consciousness through the media and mounting check points in various communities. It was equally found through the views of the respondents that the roles performed by the police have the capacity of sustaining the current control level on kidnapping trend in Anambra Anambra State. It was recommended that there be the need to improve the current partnership between NPF and members of the public to allow successful grass-root policing at the lowest community level where most kidnappings occur, and to introduce the proactive policing approach which focuses on the application of latest technological tools in crimes detection and control.
Keywords: *Kidnapping, Crimes control, Police effectiveness, Accountable security institutions, Nigeria Police Force.*

Introduction

One of the most important needs for human survival is the security of lives and property. If these needs are not met within the society, human life would be a reflection of Thomas Hobbes's description of life as poor, nasty, brutish and short (Runciman, 1997). It is the recognition of this great need that social contract theory assumes that the protection of lives and property is a social contract which the State (represented by the police force) has with the citizens. In every civili6464zed society across the globe, this social contract has often been reflected in the establishment of various policing organizations, both at the national and international contexts. Just like in other nations, the Nigeria Police Force (NPF) has been charged with the responsibility

of crime prevention, protection of life and property, enforcement of laws and maintenance of peace and public order right from the pre-colonial era to the present democratic dispensation in Nigeria; a strategic role that no other agency of the government is so critically able to assume (Alemika&Chukwuma, 2003).

In the bid to play these roles, the NPF in recent time, have been faced with lots of challenges emanating from the lapses in the structural arrangement of the Nigerian socio-economic, cultural and political system such as: unemployment, inequality, poverty, ethnicity, tribalism and materialism etc. These problems have resulted to serious crimes which affect the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. Among such crimes, kidnapping (which refers to the criminal act of taking away of a person by force, threat or deceit, with intent to cause him or her to be detained against his or her will for ransom or for political purposes), has been evidenced in the recent time as one of the most obnoxious, dreaded and feared violent crimes in the contemporary Nigerian society. This is because, for the past two decades, in almost every part of the Nigerian society, the trend of kidnapping has occupied greater part of the media, policy making and financial resources' allocation (Adebayo, 2013). In the past few years, the menace of kidnapping have become very worrisome; with some recorded successes in the arrest of some notorious kidnappers and the rescuing of some kidnap victims by the Nigerian Police Force (NPF). Evidences of both the trend and some success stories abound in recent academic literatures (Falayi, 2017; Ngwama, 2014); as well documented media and government records. Despite the success stories, as day unfolds, kidnapping trend is waxing stronger in both dynamics and frequency across States in Nigeria and has even become intense in the Northern parts of Nigeria.

Kidnapping as a crime is not quite new in Nigeria; but its emergence as an economic enterprise is relatively novel in the Nigerian socio-economic and political environment. The first major incident of kidnapping for ransom was recorded in Nigeria in year 2006 when the militants of the Niger Delta region took total hostage to protest the inequality in the region (Ngwama, 2014). Although kidnapping for ransom was not the major aim of this venture, the action turned to an economic venture and spread across different cities of Nigeria within a space of few years as criminal elements in Nigeria became innovative of the idea that kidnapping can actually yield economic benefits. Thus, the trend of kidnapping which scholars have associated with varying motives

ranging from economic, political and social reasons, has had its toll on the lives of many individuals and their families, to the extent that many lives have been wasted and many homes left in abject penury. One of the surprising things about the kidnapping trend in Nigeria is that it has grown over the years and has been adopted as an industry for abducting political rivals, community rivals and financially advantaged calibres in the society (Ordu, 2014).

Thus, with the growing trend of kidnapping in Nigeria, the police are expected to be in the forefront in fighting and controlling this trend. However, researchers have the opinion that criminals and kidnappers are surely beating the police force in the game (Karimu, 2014). In most cases, when the police thought they are winning the war against kidnapping and flaunting their score-cards of anti-kidnapping efforts, kidnappers are busy changing their tactics in a less cumbersome but more efficient manner (Umeagbalasi, 2013). Hence, many of the perpetrators of kidnapping go scot-free (Mackay, 2014). One wonders then, if this is equally the situation in Anambra State, considering the view that in recent time, the State has been regarded as one of the most peaceful and secured States in Nigeria. Thus, it is no gain saying that cases of kidnapping have been witnessed in heightened degree compared to other States Nigeria in recent time. That does not also negate the fact that there are pockets of kidnapping cases in various communities within the State.

Result of the study we conducted in 2015 regarding police strategies in kidnapping control in Anambra State (Nwadike, 2015) showed that the police was rated efficient in their strategies towards kidnapping control and that kidnapping rate was lower compared to other neighbouring States. In the light of that study, we extend our current research to assess the roles which the police plays in controlling kidnapping; as well as assessing the perceived potency of such roles in sustaining the current level of control on the trend of kidnapping in Anambra State, Nigeria. We take this approach with the assumption that results obtained in this study will help other States battling with the trend of kidnapping to consider such roles and apply to within the context of their States in order to nip kidnapping in the bud; and to equally identify areas where adjustments need to be effected for optimal role performance of the NPF in kidnapping control.

The problem

It is a clear fact that kidnapping is a serious problem in Nigeria. Despite the efforts put in place by the police, to curb the menace of kidnapping, as well as several policies and strategies put in place to control the trend of kidnapping, the trend of kidnapping in Nigeria remains alarming. It is the seriousness of the problem that has warranted several policy decisions from different governments at the state and federal levels over the past few years. For instance, when the Inspector-General of Police, Ibrahim Idris, assumed office in June 2016, he kick-started the anti-kidnapping war by constituting the Intelligence Response Team (IRT). Also, some States in Nigeria proposed and enacted stiffer laws against kidnapping, such as penalties ranging from life imprisonment in Edo State, Imo State and Rivers State, to death penalty in Anambra and AkwaIbom States (Babington-Ashaye, 2009; Olisha, 2009; Ordu, 2014).

The presence of law enforcement authorities was also increased in some sensitive regions with incidences of kidnapping activities. Anyanwu (2009) pointed out that there was increased police commands, improved police-logistics in equipment adaptation, and police refined operational behaviour, which were meant to successfully battle with the sophisticated weaponry of the kidnappers. The law enforcement commands equally established anti-terrorist squads, task forces, joint patrol teams, police-vigilante services and had even extended invitation to the Nigerian Army, State Security Services (SSS) and the Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC) to complement the efforts of the police (Osumah&Aghedo, 2011). Yet many States keep suffering the brunt of kidnapping cases.

In the bid to tackle the consequences of kidnapping, many States in Nigeria began to devise internal policies to support the police in the fight against kidnapping. Anambra State is one of the States that have relatively succeeded in controlling the trend of kidnapping which ravaged the States in the past few years. The NPF in the State obviously played a significant role in such success story. However, it is not quite clear the specific roles that the police played, as well as how effective and sustainable such roles may become in bringing total end to the problem of kidnapping in the State. Previous studies related to this topic have looked at the topic from other dimensions; hence as far as the researcher knows, no study has been carried out on this topic particularly within the context

of researches in Anambra State. This creates a knowledge gap which this present study seeks to break.

This study considers this area of inquiry very important, because it will systematically identify and ascertain the effectiveness of the roles played by the NPF in controlling kidnapping trend in Anambra State, Nigeria, as well as come up with results that could be useful for policies further improve the police force for optimum efficiency; as well as serving as a blueprint for police in other States affected by the crime wave. Although various scholars have noted the police's overall performance as it relates to their effectiveness, these challenges have not been systematically analysed in Anambra State, Nigeria, in the context of kidnapping. Therefore, this present study is designed to bridge the knowledge gap.

Objectives of the Study
1. To identify the major roles of the police in controlling the kidnapping in Anambra state.
2. To determine the perceived potency of the roles played by the police, in sustaining the current level of control in kidnapping in Anambra state.

Brief Review of Related Literature Review

Concept of Kidnapping Different authors have conceptualized the kidnapping in order to remove definitive ambiguities. However, here are just a few definitions summarized. Kidnapping refers to the forceful seizure, taking away and unlawful detention of a person against his/her will (Asuquo, 2009); an act of seizing, taking away and keeping a person in custody either by force or fraud (Abraham, 2010); an act of an angry man who wants to take any person of value hostage, and who could be rescued by loved ones. In most cases, victims are often released after payment of ransom (Nwaorah, 2009); the act of taking a person or group of persons into captivity in order to achieve a defined aim (Ani &Nweke, 2014). For Uzorma and Nwanegbo-Ben (2014, p. 132), kidnapping is the "act of seizing and detaining or carrying away a person by unlawful force or by fraud, and often with a demand for ransom. These definitions have common themes which include the fact that an individual or individuals is/are involved as the victim who is taken away forcefully; and a perpetrator whose aim is to hold the victim hostage in a way as to obtained monetary ransom before the victim(s) is/are released.

NPF Historical Trajectory Challenges Historically, policing in Nigeria can be traced to three epochs, that is, the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras (Alemika, 2010). However, the present police force in Nigeria is a product of the past British colonial rule which instituted the police to protect the commercial interest of the colonial masters at the detriment of the masses which they were commissioned to protect. Rotimi (2001) described this pattern of policing as that in which strangers policed strangers. The police in that colonial era were pitched against the people they were supposed to protect and there were series of clashes between the police and the people. According to Alemika, (2003), the police force was created as mere instruments of the British government to suppress and exploit the resources within their reach and to sustain the alien domination. Thus, it is the structure of the colonial police that has shaped the present policing structure in Nigeria.

However, the present Nigerian Police force is a society outfit that is federally controlled; of which, the 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Section 214 (1) as amended, states that: "there shall be a police force for Nigeria, which shall be known as the Nigeria Police Force, and subject to the provisions of this section, no other police force shall be established for the federation or any part thereof" (Alemika, 2010, P.8). This implies that the NPF is saddled (theoretically) with the responsibility of combating crime and ensuring security of lives and property of the people in Nigeria among many other things. The statutory functions of the Nigerian Police force as identified by Adegoke (2014) include: prevention of crime, protection of lives and property, law enforcement, maintenance of peace and public order, provision of a wide range of services to the citizens. By doing this, it has the potential for violence and right to use coercive means in order to establish social control (Adegoke, 2014).

Recent experiences in Nigeria, however, suggest that numerous security outfits have emerged, including local vigilante services; a trend that has been attributed to the abysmal performance and inefficiency of the police in achieving their mandate (Onyeozili, 2005; Alemika, 2010). Other scholars also have the opinion that the capacity of Nigeria police in monitoring and managing the social space in the Nigerian nation is disappointingly suboptimal and will continue to remain so unless a new relationship of honest and genuine interdependence is built between the government

and the governed and between the police as an institution of government and civil society as those from whom government derives its legitimacy (Ajayi&Longe, 2015; Ogunwale, 2010).

Despite the fact that many studies have argued that the Nigeria Police Force have been inefficient in performing their duties in crime control, one cannot condemn their efforts in totality. However, the police's inability to provide accountable protection through effective institutions in Nigeria can only be traced to the society's socio-political and economic system, which appears to hinder any attempt made by the police to be fruitless. Thus, the following sub-section reviews some prevailing challenges affecting police effectiveness in kidnapping control.

Previous Studies on Police Effectiveness in Kidnapping Control In O'Connor (2010), data from the Canadian 1999 General Social Survey were analyzed with respect to victimization, personal safety, attitudes toward the criminal justice system, as well as how well the police do their work (e.g., enforcing the laws, promptly responding to calls, being approachable, and ensuring citizen safety). The study found that people's perception of the police was mediated by whether they themselves had been victims of crime and whether they felt safe. If they had been victimized, they gave less favourable assessments of police. Conversely, if they felt safe, they thought more highly of the police. In other words, the perception of the police as being effective is dependent on how safe the members of the community feel within their environment. Since Anambra State has come to be regarded as one the peaceful States at the time of this study, there is therefore the tendency that the members of the public may have positive ratings regarding the roles of the police in controlling kidnapping in Anambra State.

Ajibade (2011) used a sample of 300 respondents selected through simple random sampling technique to study crime prevention and control in Ogun state police command, Nigeria. Data for the study were collected through the use of questionnaire and oral interviews and analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequency count and percentage; while the data obtained through interviews content were analysed. The findings with regards to the effectiveness of the police in crime control functions shows that, a majority of the respondents in the study were of the opinion that the police were not highly effective in crime control and this was attributed to the myriad of challenges facing the police. There is a likelihood that different results may be obtained in this

present study since the study was conducted in a different State from this present study. Perhaps, the Structure of police relations with the public may vary within the two States, which could influence different results in this present study.

Karimu (2014) conducted a qualitative survey assessing Nigeria Police Force performance in crime prevention and control among residents in three communities in three local governments of Osun State, Nigeria. The study being qualitative in nature, utilized twelve In-Depth Interviews (IDI) with members of selected communities, which was supplemented with six sessions of Focused Group Discussion (FGD), to obtain data from the respondents. The data was analysed using the thematic method of content analysis. The findings of the study indicated that the Nigeria police force was rated poor in the control of violent crimes. It was indicated in the study that the socio-political order prevalent in Nigeria inhibits effective police performance in addition to the fact that high level of unemployment has made the crime situation overwhelming for the police to control effectively. This research used a qualitative approach that has a high capacity to produce in-depth knowledge of a phenomenon of interest. However, this present study relied heavily on quantitative data and less emphasis on qualitative data, which could be a point of divergence between Karimu's findings and the findings that would be obtained in this present study.

Ayayi and Longe (2015) examined public perception of the police in crime prevention in Nigeria using 1350 members of 15 professional groups in strategic partnership with the Police, who were selected through the use of both multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques. Questionnaire was the major instrument used for data collection. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of the study revealed that to a very large extent, the police capacity in crime prevention and control was sub-optimal, as a majority of the respondents perceived the police to be insensitive to the security plight of the people, which often marred smooth relationship between the police and the public at large. The findings also revealed that the police were unfriendly and always in perpetual collision with the members of the public which often engender a feeling of deficit, blotting the image of the police in the eyes of the public.

In addition, Edet (2017) conducted a survey on the topic "Crime Control and Policing in the Nation States: The Nigerian Police in Focus", with the objective of examining the perceived effectiveness,

ability and strength of the Nigerian Police in fighting crime in Nigeria. 300 study participants were randomly selected and administered with the structured questionnaire. Data analysis for the study was done quantitatively using simple frequency and percentage tables. It was found in the study that the Nigerian police was perceived as inefficient, corrupt and ineffective in crime control. Different findings may be obtained in this study based on the view that police-public relations in Anambra State has improved tremendously in recent time. This single factor can influence public positive view about the police regarding their roles in kidnapping control. Besides, the State has become relatively peaceful in terms of kidnapping cases; as such, the members of the public may likely attribute such peace to the efforts of the police in the State.

Theoretical Framework

This study anchors its theoretical framework on the Social Contract Theory (SCT) as posited by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) with other noble authors such as John Locke (1632-1704) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). Thomas Hobbes, an English thinker, in his book Leviathan, argued that men in the state of nature shared the common banality of being potential murderers in their quest for power, a situation that placed all men in the same insecurity. According to him, life in the state of nature is poor, nasty, brutish and short. People would be forced to be solely self-interested in order to survive and prone to fight over possession of scarce goods. But this state of nature is not consistent with human nature; thus, the social contract is a deliberate effort to deliver society from a state of nature to a flourishing society in which even the weak can survive (Lindsey & Beach, 2002).

To social contract theorists, the purpose of establishing the government is to better protect the rights that people already naturally possess: those of life, liberty and property. Citizens enter a bargain in which they agree to give up their power to enforce their own rights to the government and trust that the government will use this power to benefit the public. If a government proves to be ineffective at securing the basic rights of life, liberty and property, then the people owe no allegiance to it. As an agent of the government, the police are also bound by this social contract. Their power is held as a public trust. This informs the police on the general expectations the public have about their occupation and the attitude they should exhibit in the course of performing their roles (Runciman, 1997).

The Nigeria police force represents that state's sovereign authority which is contracted by the society to secure their lives and properties. Hence, social contract theory justifies the power that law enforcement agents can exert over the population as a whole (Evans & MacMillan, 2014). The power imbalance between law enforcement agents and the members of the public is part of the contract that society has agreed upon in exchange for accountable security institutions. Where the contract can be problematic is when the power used by law enforcement exceeds what is expected by society under the social contract, which amounts to unaccountability. Thus, under the social contract arrangement, the police are expected to be proactive, strategize and re-strategise in times of security breach such as in crimes of kidnapping and other violent crimes, in order to meet up their expected role of safeguarding the lives and properties of the public.

The social contract theory helps to underscore the rationale behind the powers and roles assigned to the police in the fight against crime that makes them accountable as an agency that maintains social order and peace. As a result, the police force is expected to be effective in its role performance. The members of the public are therefore likely to rate them as inefficient when the rate of violent crimes are on the increase and vice versa.

Materials and Methods

This study used the mixed research design. This method involved the combination of quantitative and qualitative approach to data collection and presentation. Stange, Crabtree and Miller (2006) opined that the mixed research design involves integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to generate new knowledge and can involve either concurrent or sequential use of these two methods to follow a line of inquiry. The area of this study is Anambra State. It is one of the States in the South-Eastern political zone of Nigeria. It was created from the old Anambra State on the 27th August, 1991, and currently has 21 local government areas and 117 local communities (Chukwuemeka & Chukwujindu, 2013). The State is located within the boundaries of Delta State in the West, Imo State and Rivers State in the South, Enugu State in the East and Kogi State in the North. The choice of this area of study was informed by several pockets of kidnap cases in the State; Meanwhile, the police in Anambra state have also had questionable issues concerning public accountability and efficiency in the past such as the unaccountability of over 35 corpses that were

found at Ezu-River Amansea, which up till date, no crude police investigation report pertaining the culprits of the act has been issued to the public (Anaba, 2017).

However, the geographic scope of this study covered selected urban and rural Local Government Areas (L.G.As) within the three senatorial districts of Anambra State. These included: Awka South and Idemili North L.G.As – selected from Anambra Central senatorial district; Onitsha South and Oyi L.G.As – selected from Anambra North senatorial district; and Nnewi North and Ekwusigo L.G.As – selected from Anambra South senatorial district.

The target population of this study comprised of adult residents within the selected study L.G.As, aged 18 years and above. Thus, the researchers considered the following groups appropriate to form the target population: market traders, community opinion leaders, road transport workers, community vigilante groups and civil servants. These groups were chosen based on the consideration of their level of maturity, knowledge and experience about police operations within the study area; coupled with the view that they have direct and constant dealings with the police. After gathering data from the respective selected study groups within the selected L.G.As, the target population for the study was put at 24,878. Using this population, a sample of three hundred and ninety four (394) samples was determined using the Yamane (1967) formula for calculating sample sizes. The proportionate stratified sampling technique was used in selecting the respondents for the study. This involved selecting respondents in their various groups based on their proportion to the entire population of the study.

Data for the study were collected through questionnaire distribution as well as through In-depth Interviews with selected stakeholders in the study area. Out of the 394 copies of the questionnaire distributed, only 379 usable copies (representing 96.2% of the distributed questionnaire copies) were collected back and used for data analysis.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used to process the quantitative data obtained from the field research. With the aid of the same software, data were analysed and presented using simple descriptive statistics including simple percentages and frequency tables. The qualitative data obtained through the IDI were however, analysed thematically using content

analysis. This was done by transcribing important themes from the IDIs and using the findings to support the quantitative data to reach a valid conclusion and recommendations.

Results / Findings

Table 1: *Summary of descriptive statistics on the demographic characteristics of the respondents*

Variables	Frequency	Percentage %
Gender		
Male	247	65.2
Female	132	34.8
Total	**379**	**100**
Age		
18-27years	37	9.8
28-37years	108	28.5
38-47years	138	36.4
>48years/above	96	25.3
Total	**379**	**100.0**
Marital Status		
Single	89	23.5
Married	188	49.6
Divorced	13	3.4
Separated	27	7.1
Widowed	62	16.4
Total	**379**	**100.0**
Level of Educational Attainment		
No formal Education	7	1.8
FSLC	24	6.3
GCE/SSCE/WAEC	73	19.3
OND/NCE	116	30.6
HND/B.Sc.	144	38.0
M.Sc./Ph.D.	15	4.0
Total	**379**	**100.0**

Data anlaysed in table 1 shows that a higher proportion (65.2%) of male respondents participated in the study compared to females (34.8%). With respect to age, a majority (36.4%) of the respondents aged between 38-47 years. This is followed by 28.5% and 25.3% of them who were between 28-37 years and 48 years and above, respectively; while the least participated age categories 9.8% of them who aged between 18–27 years. The mean age of the respondents is 42.8years. This shows that the respondents were mature enough to provide reliable information on the theme of this study.

A majority (49.6%) of the respondents indicated being married, while 23.5% of them were single. Also, 16.4% of the respondents were widowed and 7.1% and 3.4% of them indicated being separated and divorced respectively. With regards to the educational attainment of the respondents, it was found that a majority (38.0%) of the respondents completed their tertiary educational level - obtaining HND/B.Sc certificates. This was followed by 30.6% of them who obtained OND/NCE certificates. While 19.3% of the respondents completed the secondary school academic level, 6.3% of them completed on the primary school level – obtaining the FSLC. This shows that there is an appreciable level of educational attainment among the populace within the study area. Only 4.0% of the respondents attended up to the post-graduate (M.Sc/Ph.D) academic levels, while a much lower proportion of them indicated that they had no formal education.

Roles Performed by the Police in Kidnapping Control
The respondents were presented with multiple statements each measured on a 5-point Likert scale, and asked to indicate their agreement on each of the items to indicate the roles played by the police within their communities to nip kidnapping in the bud. The analysis followed in the pattern of item-by-item analysis. However, to manage and to easily describe or summarise the data, the two Likert scale options reflecting positive responses (i.e. Strongly Agree and Agree) were re-coded into one single response option – to form the positive response category. Equally, the two options reflecting negative responses (i.e. Disagree and Strongly Disagree) were re-coded into one single response option – to form the negative response category; while the 'undecided' option was retained as the neutral response category. Analysis performed on the items is presented in table 2.

Table 2: *Respondents Views on the Roles Played by the Police in Kidnapping Control*

Statements	Strongly Agree/ Agree	Disagree/ Strongly Disagree	Undecided	Missing Values	Total
→ Creating additional community police posts	44 (11.6%)	204 (53.8%)	106 (28.0%)	25 (6.6%)	379 (100.0%)
→ Informing the public about changes in operations of kidnappers	184 (48.5%)	130 (34.3%)	45 (11.9%)	20 (5.3%)	379 (100.0%)
→ Educating the public through the media on security consciousness	291 (76.8%)	68 (17.9%)	20 (5.3%)	0 (0.0%)	379 (100.0%)
→ Mounting checking points at various communities	288 (76.0%)	66 (17.4%)	25 (6.6%)	0 (0.0%)	379 (100.0%)
→ Identifying hotspots/kidnappers' hideouts	110 (29.0%)	207 (54.6%)	55 (14.5%)	7 (1.8%)	379 (100.0%)
→ Planting informants within communities	157 (41.4%)	84 (22.2%)	103 (27.2%)	35 (9.2%)	379 (100.0%)
→ Collaboration with members of local vigilante groups	243 (64.1%)	106 (28.0%)	24 (6.3%)	6 (1.6%)	379 (100.0%)
→ Improving community vigilance using technological devices	53 (14.0%)	248 (65.4%)	70 (18.5%)	8 (2.1%)	379 (100.0%)
→ Constituting Special anti-kidnapping squad	108 (28.5%)	204 (53.8%)	55 (14.5%)	12 (3.2%)	379 (100.0%)
→ Improving police-community relations	211 (55.7%)	105 (27.7%)	58 (15.3%)	5 (1.3%)	379 (100.0%)
→ Providing a public emergency hot-lines	213 (56.2%)	100 (26.4%)	55 (14.5%)	11 (2.9%)	379 (100.0%)

Eleven statements reflecting the likely roles of the police in kidnapping control were identified and put forward to the respondents to obtain their views about the statement within the context of the present study area. The respondents were obliged to respond in each of the statements – to show whether or not the NPF employed the roles controlling kidnapping in Anambra State. Accordingly, findings of the study showed that 9 out of the 11 items in the table received more of positive responses than the negative or neutral options; while 2 items received more of negative response. This implies that the NPF played roles in the areas of; i) educating the public on the media regarding security consciousness, ii) mounting checking points at various communities in the State, iii) collaborating with members of the local communities to fight kidnappers, iv) providing the public with emergency hot-lines, v) improving police-relations, among other roles as contained in table 2.

Further probe was thrown to the respondents regarding the most significant among the roles highlighted in table 2, which quelled the rate of kidnapping in Anambra State. Result of data analysis on their responses in line with this is presented in table 3.

Table 3: *Respondents' Views on Most Significant Role of the Police that Quelled the Rate of Kidnapping in Anambra State.*

Options	*Frequency*	*Percent*
→ Creating additional community police posts	10	2.6
→ Informing the public about changes in operations of kidnappers	15	4.0
→ Educating the public through the media on security consciousness	85	22.4
→ Mounting checking points at various communities	56	14.8
→ Identifying hotspots/kidnappers' hideouts	7	1.8
→ Planting informants within communities	18	4.7
→ Collaboration with members of local vigilante groups	37	9.8
→ Improving community vigilance using technological devices	12	3.2
→ Constituting special anti-kidnapping squad	32	8.4
→ Improving police-community relations	25	6.6
→ Providing a public emergency hot-lines	35	9.2
→ parading identified suspects on the media	47	12.4
Total	379	100.0

The analysis conducted on the responses as contained in table 3 shows that a majority (22.4%) of the respondents considered education of the public on security consciousness through the media as the most significant role of the police that helped to quell the rate of kidnapping in Anambra State. Another important role considered by 14.8% of them is the role of mounting check points at various communities. However, the least significant role as indicated by only 1.8% of the respondents is that of identifying hotspots/kidnappers' hideouts. This implies that the NPF have not come in terms with the techniques involved in mapping out hotspots where such types of crimes are likely to occur, which is part of the current proactive policing approaches applicable in modern policing across the globe. This in no small measure has to do with technology application, which is equally an area where the NPF are finding it difficult in terms of operational logistics and techniques. These findings are consistent the qualitative findings, as an interviewee had this to say,

> …one of the significant roles played by the police which helped to reduce kidnapping to the current level of that of public consciousness about kidnapping. The police force made it a duty to enforce that consciousness about kidnapping and other related crimes through the use of media. The slogan used was 'if you see something, say something'. This message was frequent in the radio and television stations for quite a while until the rate of kidnapping declined. ...certainly, there are

other roles which the police played with respect to curbing the rate of kidnapping; but for me, this is clearly one of the most significant among the roles (Male, 65 Years Old, Community Opinion Leader, Anambra State).

Another interviewee equally submitted that,

Despite that the police are faced with enormous challenges that affect their performance in crimes control, they are trying their best in working with members of the public especially in creating awareness about crimes prevention. In most occasions, if you listen to the radio, you will get announcements about emergency lines to call when there are suspected crime incidences. I feel also that there has been a remarkable improvement in police-community relations with regards to crimes control in most communities in Anambra State (Male, 62 years old, Business Entrepreneur, Awka South L.G.A, Anambra State).

Perceived Potency of the Roles Played by the Police, in Sustaining the Current Level of Control in Kidnapping

The respondents were further presented with question asking them to indicate how much they considered the roles of the police in sustaining the current control level of kidnapping in Anambra State. Analysis conducted on the responses given by the respondents is presented in figure 1.
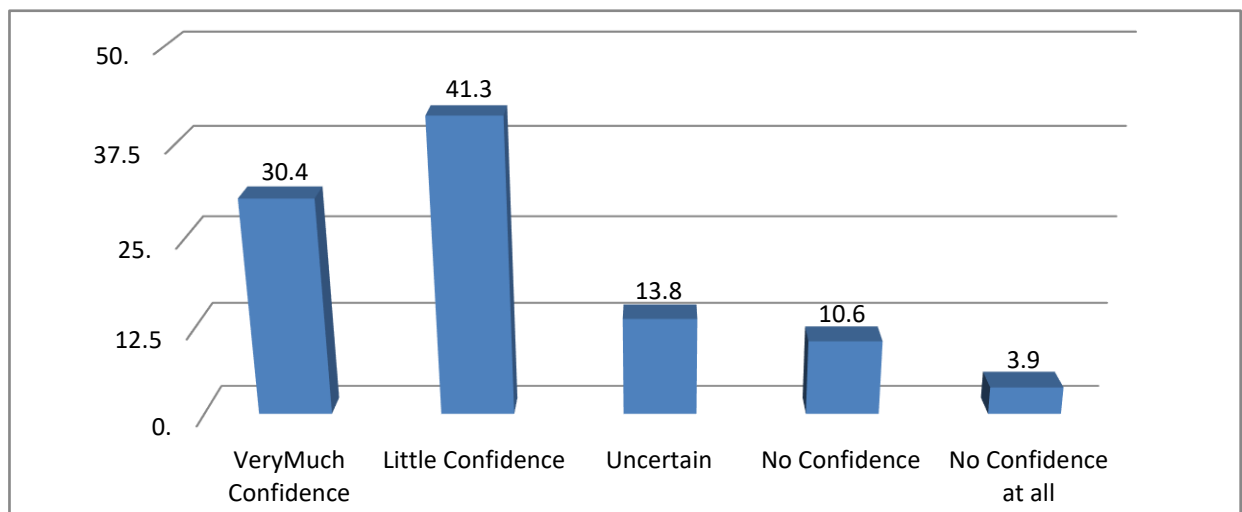
Fig. 1: Respondents' Level of Confidence on the Roles Played by the Police in Sustaining the Current Level of Control on Kidnapping

As contained in figure, a majority (41.3%) of the respondents expressed a little confidence that the roles played by the police in controlling kidnapping trend in Anambra States have the potential of sustaining the current achievements in cracking down kidnapping trend in the State. Equally, another significant proportion (30.4%) of them expressed very much confidence about the issue in question. At the overall, the proportion of the respondents who expressed confidence on the police roles for sustained control in the level of kidnapping, are quite greater than those who expressed low confidence about it. This goes to show that there is a relatively improved level of public confidence on the police within the context of Anambra State, Nigeria. Commenting on this issue, an interviewee said that,

> With the current peace and security achieved in Anambra State, I have the confidence that if the government continues to support the police, they will not only sustain the current peace but do more to make sure that we don't hear cases of kidnapping in the State again. …yes there seems to be serious crack down on kidnapping in the State, but you know… once in a while we still hear stories of such crime – meaning that it has not totally been controlled. But if the government and the people continue to support the police, a lot more can be achieved (Male, 52 Years, Senior Civil Servant, Anambra State).

Still on the perceived effectiveness of the NPF in controlling kidnapping trend in Anambra state, another respondent added that,

> I think Anambra Police command is one of the best when it comes to not only the control of kidnapping but other violent crimes like armed robbery, murder, or ritual killings etc. With the effort of the NPF in Anmbra state, I think that kidnapping has been curtailed to a greater extent. So, I rate them very effective in controlling kidnapping in Anambra state (Male, 62 years old, Business Entrepreneur, Awka South L.G.A, Anambra state).

Conclusion/Recommendations

The study we conducted in 2015 established the fact that there was an appreciable reduction in the trend of kidnapping in Anambra State, as compared to other States within the Southeast Nigeria. This was attributed to the efforts of the NPF in Anambra States. As a follow-up study, this present study sought to identify the specific roles played by the NPF to forestall kidnapping trend in the State – with the view to determine if such roles are capable of sustaining the current level of control achieved on kidnapping trend. Findings of this study had provided evidence to help conclude that the NPF played a number of roles to nip kidnapping in the bud within the context of Anambra

State, Nigeria. One of the most prominent roles played by the NPF as determined through this study is the role of creating the consciousness to the public about the need for security consciousness. Another important role was mounting checkpoints in strategic locations within various communities of the State. It is equally believed by the members of the public that these roles have the potency of sustaining the current level of control achieved in the fight against kidnapping in the State. These findings are therefore important for other States in Nigeria that are battling with the crime of kidnapping. By understanding the potency of these roles in curbing kidnapping trend, they would cue along with these roles or modify these roles and implement them alongside other policies that help the police in the fight against kidnapping and other violent crimes.

In the light of the above, it is recommended that to improve and sustain the current effort of the police in controlling kidnapping and other violent crimes in the Nigeria and Anambra state in particular, there is the need for the police to continue to strengthen the existing relationship between them and members of the public. This would allow for efficient grass-root policing at the lowest community levels where most of the kidnappings occur. This is because the members of the public can only provide relevant information to the police about crime challenges within their communities if there is a mutual relationship between them and the police. To do this, the police clearly needs to do more to ensure accountability, transparency and integrity, so as to gain the confidence of the members of the public.

Furthermore, the trend of kidnapping has gone beyond the traditional forms; hence kidnappers now take advantage of the availability of technological tools in the committing the crime. Therefore, there is the need for the introduction of IT based investigation method such as the phone tracking method, hot-spot and surveillance system using surveillance cameras in the NPF. Of course these schemes require finance, and training. As such, the Police Service Commission should approach the federal and state governments on the need for financial provisions that will take care of both the acquisition of modern policing technological gadgets, and the training of the police personnel on the use of such technologies.

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