

Urban Security Challenges: A Review of Crime Prevention Strategies Adopted by Residents in Greater Port Harcourt City, Rivers State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The vulnerability to the insecurity of cities, and how best to address them, have been subject to considerable discussions. With the rising crime rate in cities in Nigeria, households have provided for their security, particularly with structures in the building, streets and neighbourhoods. Observation of streets and houses in Greater Port Harcourt City Area show high fences (some with the addition of razor wires), gates to streets manned by security personnel, use of CCTV, electrified gates and fences, burglary proofing of windows, doors and even roofs. This research reviews strategy adopted by residents in curbing crime across different neighbourhoods of Greater Port Harcourt City. The study utilizes a survey research methodology based on data obtained from four hundred and ninety-eight (498) respondents drawn from four neighbourhoods selected purposively (three from planned neighbourhoods in the inner city and one large neighbourhood in the peri-urban area). The study followed a multi-stage framework. Five streets in the inner city and fifteen streets in the peri-urban area were randomly selected in the study neighbourhoods. This was followed by the selection of twenty houses on each street using the systematic sampling method. In each house, one household head was randomly picked for questionnaire administration. The results revealed that the use of urban design elements to control crime between the inner-city neighbourhoods and the neighbourhoods in the urban periphery of the city differed significantly. The inner-city made greater use of

natural surveillance to control crime whereas the peri-urban area utilized target hardening. State actors and non-state actors were used for crime control across the neighbourhoods; however, income status was a key determinant of preference. The high income was favourable to the formal instrument of state power, the police while the low income preferred the non-state actors, the local vigilante. This study recommends an integrated crime prevention strategy for the entire city; adequate funding of security by the Government, the provision of amenities and street furniture, the use of neighbourhood plans that promotes defensible space in emerging areas, the introduction of technology and community policing in crime prevention will achieve far greater long-term security for the Greater Port Harcourt metropolis.

Keywords: Urban security, Crime prevention, Neighbourhood, Greater Port Harcourt City.

INTRODUCTION

The challenges of urbanization cannot be underestimated. Urbanization globally has reached more than half of the world's population and has become one of the first structural aspects that are influencing cities and the concomitant security challenges (Vanderschueren, 2013). Similarly, UN (2020) argues that the trend of urbanization will continually increase in the coming years and this will cause insecurity challenges in urban areas. This means that level of criminality in urban

areas will increase in polymorphous patterns, complex and will be difficult to contain through the spontaneous social control which characterizes rural areas and small towns (Vanderschueren, 2013). Aligning with these lines of thought, studies and reports by the Centre for Law Enforcement Education Foundation (CLEEN) in Alemika (2014) stated that Nigerian cities and peri-urban towns are experiencing urban crime in a dimension that is unprecedented and incomprehensible to policy analysts. The Greater Port Harcourt City which comprises a blend of eight contiguous local government areas (Port Harcourt, parts of Oyigbo, Okirika, Ogu/Bolo, Obio/Akpor, Ikwerre, Etche and Eleme) is arguably the third most economically important city in Nigeria, being the centre of oil and gas industry (oil and gas being the main foreign exchange earner for Nigeria). The city, with three special development anchors; the international airport, major seaports in Onne and a bustling old city is a beehive of educational activities (federal and state-owned universities and polytechnics), burgeoning commercial and industrial activities, a very active informal sector, and expandable land (Cookey-Gam, 2013; Nwokaeze & Dawaye, 2020) experiences insecurity challenges. The city is continuously attracting immigrants which are causing a tremendous population increase and spatial spread. However, as the population continues to increase with both the unemployed and the unemployable questing for white-collar jobs, the number of jobs available seems limited to contain both the unemployable and non-employable (Ejo-Orusa, 2020). This unemployment paradigm is what has provided a platform for vulnerable youths to be recruited into over 100 cult groups in Rivers State (Ijuye-Dagogo, 2018) engaging in activities according to Nwakanma, (2018) such as armed robbery, kidnap for ransom, cybercrime, political thuggery, vandalizing of oil pipes, oil bunkering, among others. Brown, Dike & Wocha, (2015) in their work

suggested that Port Harcourt recently has been faced with the problem of insecurity while Nwokaeze & Dawaye (2020) established that Port Harcourt records many violent crimes such as; rape, kidnapping, armed robbery, burglary, cult-related killings, homicide and possible terrorist attacks reference to the recent activities of “Unknown Gun Men” alleged by the Police to be sympathetic to the proscribed Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), seeking for self-determination and secession from the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The observation of residents is that the city has become unsafe as many perceive that little is done to tackle insecurity and curtail the occurrence of crime. The cult-related organized crimes put residents into a state of anxiety and fear with not only the direct effects of displacement, injury and death but also cumulative and long-term impacts on essential services, with consequences for people’s health, education, livelihoods and dignity (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2016).

Considering these high ordered and networked crimes, it is expected that special priority with the prompt intervention of security arrangement is made by the Rivers State government to guarantee human safety and security. But there are still visible challenges of bureaucratic disconnect and laxity confronting the responsibility of the government and the Nigerian Police Force from carrying out their foremost responsibility of protecting life and property to the latter. Nigeria’s decrepit security architecture where the Federal Government has total control of the police whereas the State Governors are the pseudo ‘Chief Security Officers’ of their respective states is a glittering urban governance challenge (Nwokaeze & Dawaye, 2020). There is a growing concern for preventing crime as an urban security challenge in the world and the Greater Port Harcourt City is a case in many.

Granted that crime and the fear of being a victim of crime is the concern of everyone irrespective of class or status and

that self-preservation is said to be the first law of nature (Gibson, 2003), urban residents in the face of the rising rate of crime and insecurity have reacted and resorted in providing for their security. This they do by adopting several measures such as self-help, private security, vigilante action and unsustainable building designs, particularly with structures in the buildings, streets and neighbourhoods to control crime and avoid personal victimization (Adzande & Gyuse, 2018; Nwokaeze & Dawaye, 2020). Even security operatives build sandbags to make “security bunkers” in a bid to combat crime at the expense of aesthetic value, neighbourhood quality and physical functionality. Sequel to this phenomenon, the once-thriving “garden city of Nigeria”, as Port Harcourt was popularly known, has eroded due to these uncoordinated practices (Nwokaeze & Dawaye, 2020). The desire for personal safety and security has led to the popularity of “gated communities”; security-zone enclaves, whose primary concern is protection, characterized by defensive measures, with walls, gates, closed streets and various security devices such as CCTVs and installation of alarm systems. Whether these walls provide adequate security is a question that is open to answers (Agbola & Ntamark, 2017; Fabiyi, 2004; Nwokaeze & Dawaye, 2020).

The critical question is, are these responses driven by actual victimization of crime by residents of urban and peri-urban areas? And again, are residents of the Greater Port Harcourt City area adopting sustainable crime prevention strategies in their various localities?.

It is therefore the aim of this paper to assess residents’ strategies in curbing crime across different neighbourhoods of Greater Port Harcourt City. The paper will succeed in ascertaining the type of security arrangement in the neighbourhoods and rating of government response to crime.

1.2 The Study Area

Historically, Port Harcourt was founded in the year 1912 and was designed and purposefully built by the British colonial masters as a safe, secured and healthy city (Horsfall, 2013). The essence for the discovery and development of Port Harcourt as a port was for the trans-shipment of coal from the hinterland of Eastern Nigeria (after the discovery of coal in Udi Hills in 1909) to Europe. This was masterminded by the English colonial masters who presented the design and plan to Governor Lord Lugard. Governor Lord Lugard felt contented after much thought and discussion with the design which he so declared to be the creation of a model township and port” (Anyanwu, 1979; Owei, Ede, Obinna & Akarolo, 2008). Governor Lord Lugard, therefore, procured roughly 25sq miles of land known as Iguocha from the Ikwerre and Okrika aborigines because its site met the locational prerequisites for a rail and a port terminal. The city was therefore named after the then British Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lewis Viscount Harcourt (Anyanwu, 1979; Owei, et al., 2008).

The area comprising the municipal district of Port Harcourt was before 1918, principally secondary forest used as farmland (Anyanwu, 1979; Ogionwo, 1979; Owei, et al., 2008). From the period of colonization to post-independence, the city was characterized by beautiful lawns, well-developed layouts and neighbourhoods.

As a model city, its improvement was made conceivable by the order in 1917 of the Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance and the Township Ordinance. The Public Lands Acquisition Ordinance gave full powers to the then Governor to acquire land compulsorily for public purposes. The land so procured got to be distinctly referred to first as crown land and after political autonomy in 1960 as state land.

Under the Township Ordinance, Port Harcourt was designated as a second-class township (Lagos being the only first-class town) with the ensuing provision of

municipal utilities and services with ample space for green vegetation and lawns, flowers and trees. The city has a long history and spatial identity popularly known as the “Garden City” as visibly seen in the neighbourhood pattern, well-planned and maintained infrastructure, well laid out

buildings and streets, parks and gardens in the Old GRA layout, Orije layout, Orominike Layout, Coronation layout, Diobu-GRA layout etcetera which positively influenced the indigenous native settlements.

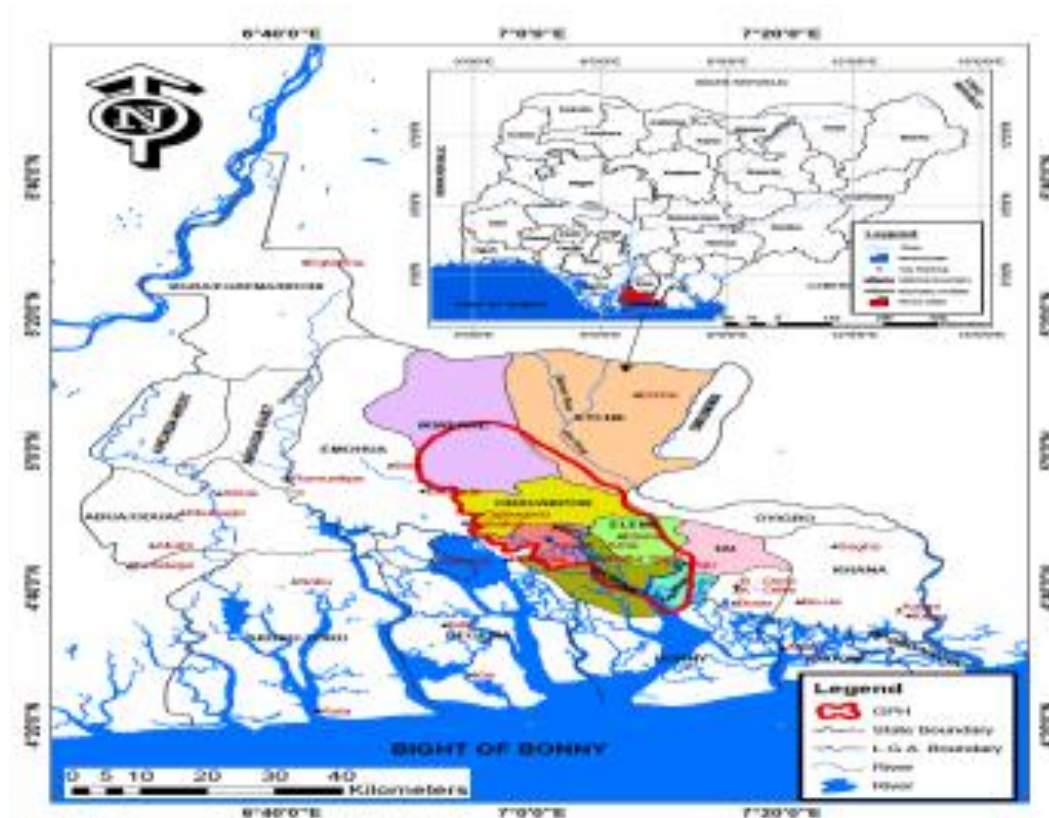


Fig.2 Map of Greater Port Harcourt City, Rivers State, Nigeria
(Source: Office of the Surveyor-General, Rivers State, 2020)

Presently, Port Harcourt city has developed beyond its limit of Port Harcourt municipality to comprise two local government areas (LGAs) –Port Harcourt City and Obio/Akpor (as shown in figure 1 above), and six additional LGAs of Ikwerre, Oyigbo, Etche, Ogu Bolo, Eleme and Okirika to make up the Greater Port Harcourt City also known as the “New City” (RSG, 2008). The city growth is towards the northeastern direction considering the riparian barriers in the southern end.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Security, Safety and Insecurity

Security is the condition or quality of being free from danger or threat. It is the

state of feeling happy and safe from danger or worry (Stevenson, 2010). “Freedom from apprehension, anxiety, or care; confidence of power of safety; hence assurance, freedom from risk; safety, that which secures or makes safe; protection, guard, defence” (Princeton University, 2006). Merriam-Webster (1828) defines it as “the state of feeling of being free from fear, care, danger, injury, damage etc.: safety or a sense of safety; freedom from doubt or uncertainty; and something that gives or assures safety; protection; safeguard”. The word security originated from the old Latin word ‘securitas’ meaning free from fear. It is the elimination of threats and one of the basic needs of humans, given that self-preservation is the first law of nature.

If security is simply the condition or quality of being free from danger or threat. It means that insecurity is simply the condition or quality of being not free from danger or threat. According to Maslow (1942), an insecure person is a person who “perceives the world as a threatening jungle and most human beings as dangerous and selfish; feels rejected and isolated anxious and hostile; is generally pessimistic and unhappy; shows signs of tension and conflict, tends to turn inward; is troubled by guilt feelings, has one or another manifestations of low self-esteem; tends to be neurotic; and is generally selfish and egocentric. Insecurity may contribute to the development of shyness, paranoia, and social withdrawal, or it may encourage compensatory behaviours such as crime-related offences, arrogance, aggression, or bullying in some cases.

Princeton University (2006) asserts that “safety is the condition or state of being safe, freedom from danger or hazard; exemption from hurt, injury, or loss. Freedom from whatever exposes one to danger or from liability to cause danger or harm; the quality of making safe or secure, or of giving confidence, justifying trust, insuring against harm or loss, it is the state of being certain that adverse effects will not be caused by some agent under defined conditions”, In this discourse, safety is considered in relation to human security which is distinct from other forms of safety such as fire, health, environment and a broader scope of national security. While national security concentrates on the protection of the State from outside aggression, human security is about shielding individuals and communities from any form of violence or insecurity. Human security is about protecting people from any type of threat and violence to the extent that the safety of life and property is ennobled. (UN, 2007; Ogboi & Eze, 2013). Human security is therefore a logical means that widen the interest in security management as an obligation from the state to the individual, drawing attention to emerging

trends about global security outlook and the need to combat these threats that threaten human existence. Overtly, human security in the local setting has become a worldwide concern since the world is now a global village. From the above literature, it can be deduced that urban security is simply the absence of a serious threat with regards to criminality and the subjective perception of protection in an urban area (Vanderschueren, 2013). This simply means that crime and the different types of crime are the challenges of urban security.

2.2 Crime as an Urban Security Challenge

Crime in urban areas is a global phenomenon and a serious urban security challenge and the storylines about crime in cities of Nigeria is not out of context. A 1 is simply an act that is contrary to legal codes or laws (Crossman, 2021). There are many different types of crimes, from crimes against persons to victimless crimes and violent crimes to white-collar crimes (Crossman, 2021).

Crossman (2021) posit as follows: “Crimes against persons also called personal crimes, include murder, aggravated assault, rape, and robbery. Property crimes involve the theft of property without bodily harm, such as burglary, larceny, auto theft, and arson. Hate crimes are crimes against persons or property that are committed while invoking prejudices of race, gender or gender identity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. Crimes against morality are also called victimless crimes because there is no complainant or victim. Prostitution, illegal gambling, and illegal drug use are all examples of victimless crimes. White-collar crimes are crimes committed by people of high social status who commit their crimes in the context of their occupation. This includes embezzling (stealing money from one’s employer), insider trading, tax evasion, and other violations of income tax laws. White-collar crimes generally generate less concern in the public mind than other types

of crime, however, in terms of total dollars, white-collar crimes are even more consequential for society. Organized crime is committed by structured groups typically involving the distribution and sale of illegal goods and services. Many people think of the Mafia when they think of organized crime, but the term can refer to any group that exercises control over large illegal enterprises (such as the drug trade, illegal gambling, prostitution, weapons smuggling, or money laundering). A key sociological concept in the study of organized crime is that these industries are organized along the same lines as legitimate businesses and take on a corporate form. There are typically senior partners who control profits, employees who manage and work for the business, and clients who buy the goods and services that the organization provides”.

Kidnapping and armed robbery gang attacks based on the way their operations are organized are looked at today in Nigeria as organized crimes.

2.3 Theories, Models and Approaches in the Explanation of Urban Security and Crime

Agbola & Ntamarik (2017) observed that crime and fear have become increasingly endemic. Scholars in the field of crime and security have therefore continued to explore more avenues to clearly understand these issues. Security experts are therefore exerting energy to create a sense of safety to justify increasing government expenditure in response to concerns raised by citizens and pressures from international institutions with laid down criteria to achieve a safe and secure environment in the form of sustainable cities, inclusive cities, smart cities and the new niche resilient cities.

Theories in criminology have established a strong relationship between securities and the built environment; environmental condition and safety, as well as variations in the neighbourhood settings and urban morphology as it affects behaviour towards outdoor activities.

Laukaitou-Sideris (2003) established that diverse models clarify the setting of the environment with respect to human conduct. One of such is the ecological model, which is based on the assumption that elements of the physical and socio-economic environment interrelate to impact an individual's conduct and inclination to engage in a dynamic way of life (Ball, Bauman & Owen, 2001). Chronic exposure to violence and crime can have a negative influence on the proclivity of citizens to use the public environment for physical activity (King, Bauman & Abrams, 2002). The physical ecology of a neighbourhood is defined by the urban structure in form of its built environment, open spaces, street network and land use mix. The characteristics of urban form greatly influence physical activity (Sallis, Johnson, Calfas, Caparosa & Nichols, 1997). In this manner, changes in human conduct are probably not going to happen without the alteration of the basic environmental variables (Klinenberg, 2002). A further defining characteristic of situational crime prevention in the physical environment is the basis in criminology literature. In practice, two criminological perspectives support crime prevention; the opportunity theory and the rational choice theory.

Crime opportunity theory, also called risk of victimization theory is of the view that changes in the nature and frequency of crime are directly proportional to changes in the opportunity structure for crime. The theory is based on the routine activities hypothesis by Cohen & Felson (1979) which says that there are three conditions needed for a crime to happen: the presence of a motivated offender, the presence of a suitable target, and the absence of capable guardians. This explains that offenders seriously review their neighbourhoods in order to recognize the right conditions to commit their crimes. Again, potential victims also review their neighbourhoods to define the places and times that are risky and threatening. This means that places where and times when

crimes happen are perceived as riskier and threatening by potential victims. As such, Doran & Burgess, (2012) assert that risk of victimization theory helps explain the distribution of fear of crime. A study carried out in the United States indicated that growth in ownership of light-weight electronic goods in addition to the rise in the number of unattended buildings during the day because more females engaged in employment was responsible for the corresponding rise of residential property burglary (Cohen & Felson, 1979). Such opportunistic crimes are usually induced by the absence of any restriction.

The rational choice theory according to Cornish & Clarke (1987) holds that most aberrant behaviours result from a choice made by the offender who is seeking economic, sexual or other benefits. These other benefits may include domination of others (as in wife or child abuse), indulgence in alcohol or drug abuse, or such mundane pleasures as having a bit of fun and excitement or achieving status in the peer group. This self-intrigue is not thought about as a continuing demeanour, portraying a reprobate or criminal minority, yet might be shown by any ordinary well-behaved individual confronted with a mix of enticement and opportunity.

Urban planning literature situated security within a spatial context, by examining design and policy interventions that create defensible space and enhance neighbourhood security. The concept of crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) evolved by Jeffery (1971) and modified by Newman (1973) reinforced the concept of defensible space: a range of mechanisms; real and symbolic barriers, strongly-defined areas of influence, and improved opportunities for surveillance; that combine to bring an environment under the control of its residents. Following criticisms in the 1970s and 1980s, defensible space ideas have been refined and expanded to include the dimension of activity support. This refers to the use of urban design and signage to encourage intended patterns of

usage of urban space believing that proper design and effective use of the built environment will enhance the quality of life (Agbola & Ntamark, 2017)

The purpose of designing out crime is to create a situation that will knock off-balance and prevent the three indispensable components that support a crime from happening which are the presence of a motivated offender, the presence of a suitable target, and the opportunity for crime in the absence of capable guardians or owner of the property or thing (Cohen & Felson, 1979; Ekblom, 2013).

Gardner (2016) stated that CPTED is a crime prevention theory focusing on tactical design and the effective use of the built environment, which when applied, reduces both crime and the fear of crime. Its main objective is to reduce and remove the opportunity for crime to occur in an environment, and promote positive interaction with the space by legitimate users in a preventative and proactive manner.

Cozens & Love (2015) and Armitage (2013) elaborated seven principles that CPTED comprises; physical security and target hardening, territorial reinforcement, natural surveillance, movement control, management and maintenance, activity support and defensible space. This natural surveillance allows the neighbours to protect their immediate community rather than relying on the police or private security guards for protection.

It is obvious therefore that CPTED ought to be engaged in strategic planning strategies to produce design guides and regulations that promote its tenets both at the local and regional level, neighbourhood to the district to the city level and so on. These will set the stage for local decision making for the use of design parameters to manipulate the likelihood of crime occurring and the potentials such modification through design interventions can achieve. Securing urban spaces is considered as one of the basic objectives in urban planning, thus planners are

developing safety-based designs for urban spaces (Ogboi, 2014) and development control regulations to enhance security in the building, street, neighbourhood and the city at large. Unfortunately, there is no such regulatory framework in the management of insecurity within the spatial context; this has left the situation open to the whims and caprices of residents, developers and designers who prepare plans.

3.0 STUDY METHODOLOGY

This study is survey research and adopted a passive-observational or correlational research design by Cook and Campbell in 1979 (Obinna, 2007). The study involved the collection of perceptual subjective data without experimental manipulation. Subjective data was obtained from a non - probability sample of subjects collected as a one-time survey of households selected from neighbourhoods within the inner-city and the urban periphery using a structured questionnaire.

The purposive (Non-probability) sampling strategy was used to select the sample size. In selecting the neighbourhoods for sampling, the following parameters were considered; geographical location either as inner-city neighbourhoods or neighbourhoods in the urban periphery, residential density (low, medium or high), physical structure, property value and neighbourhood quality. This was done according to the judgment of the researchers to ensure heterogeneity.

The 1991 population census figure was used to project to 2020 population using the exponential method $P_n = P_o (1 + r)^n$ at 5.8% national growth rate gave a projected population of 162,407. This gave a projected total of 23,201 households using

a national average of 7 persons per household. The William formula (1978) adopted in Ogboi (2014) was used to determine the sample size of the study which gave a total of 566 respondents that constituted the total number of questionnaires administered, however, four hundred and ninety-eight (498) questionnaires were returned. The study adopted a multi-stage sampling framework. Four neighbourhoods (3 inner city) and (1 contiguous and large in the peri-urban area) were chosen purposively. In each neighbourhood in the inner city, five streets were randomly selected whereas, in the peri-urban area (PUA), fifteen streets were randomly selected because of the large size of the neighbourhood. In each street, the houses were listed and twenty houses were selected in systematic sampling order. In each house, one household head was randomly picked for questionnaire administration using the one on one method.

4.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Security Arrangement in the Neighbourhoods

The analysis of Table 1 shows that Nigerian Police was the most dominant security arrangement in GRA, while local vigilante was predominant in Mile 3 Diobu (75.6%), D-Line 51.3% and Rukpoku (PUA) (47.7%). The use of vicious dogs for security is common in addition to other security measures put in place. Most residents have lost confidence in the ability of the Police to provide security. There is the suspicion of the Police being in connivance with criminal elements, and are reluctant to respond to distress calls, only to surface when the criminals have had a filled day.

Table 1: Type of Operational Security Arrangement in the Neighbourhood

	N	GRA %	N	D-Line %	N	Mile3 %	N	PUA %
Nigerian Police	52	68.4	39	48.8	15	19.2	73	27.7
Local Vigilante	-	-	41	51.3	59	75.6	126	47.7
Trained Private Security (company)	11	14.5	-	-	-	-	15	5.7
Untrained security	-	-	-	-	2	2.6	14	5.3
Vicious Dogs	13	17.1	-	-	-	-	12	4.5
None	-	-	-	-	2	2.6	24	9.1
Total	76	100.0	80	100.0	78	100.0	264	100.0

Source: Researcher's Field Survey, (2020).

4.2 Respondents Rating of Government’s Response to Crime

The rating of governments response to crime in Table 2 on the overall shows that uncertain was (43.6%), closely followed by quite positive was (334.3%), very positive (14.9%), quite negative (5.0%) and very negative (2.2%). This result is skewed

compared to the rate of victimization (24.1%) which is low. Perhaps, the fact that residents consider security as a top priority and their high expectations from the government may have informed the result. Besides, maximum security in the urban area can never be absolute, hence government needs to do more.

Table 2: Respondents Rating of Government’s Response to Crime

Rating	GRA		D-Line		Mile3		PUA	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Very positive	12	15.8	30	37.5	19	24.4	13	4.9
Quite positive	26	34.2	8	10.0	40	51.3	97	36.7
Uncertain	38	50.0	42	52.5	19	24.4	118	44.7
Quite negative	-	-	-	-	-	-	25	9.5
Very negative	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	4.2
Total	76	100.0	80	100.0	78	100.0	264	100.0

Source: Researcher’s Field Survey, (2020).

4.3 Presence of design features enhancing security

The analysis shows the use of fences as a major feature of urban design. In GRA, all the buildings (100%) had perimeter fences, In D-Line and Mile 3 Diobu, it was 33.8% and 20.5% respectively. The reason why these two neighbourhoods had few fences was that; the plot sizes are small and the building coverage is high with the court ward as the available space. In the PUA area, 64% of the buildings had perimeter fences. Perimeter fences have become a key component of our urban fabric such that there most buildings in the city are surrounded by block wall fences. In GRA, all fences complied with development control regulation of 1.2m block wall and 0.6m ornamental see-through fences, some with electric installation and alarm system, while the PUA area had more high walled fences (68.6%) with added features such as; barbs, razor wire and broken bottles. D-Line and Mile 3 Diobu had few fences, 33.8% and 20.5% respectively with a very high compliance rate of 77.8% and 75%. GRA showed the highest support to natural surveillance (82.9%), followed by D-line (77.5%), and Mile 3 Diobu (61.5%) with gridiron road network and in good condition. But it was a different scenario in the PUA neighbourhoods which recorded poor support to natural surveillance (45.8%)

with many of the streets and neighbourhood gated.

However, the PUA area encouraged target hardening and defensible space with curvilinear road networks and cul-de-sacs. Most of the roads in the PUA area were in very bad condition. This clearly shows that the planned inner-city neighbourhoods building features enhanced urban security than the PUA area. The reason may not be farfetched, In between the years 2007 and 2010, the Ministry of Urban Development and Physical Planning carried out the demolition of all high wall fences and projections within the GRA, D-Line and Diobu axis as part of its urban renewal programme. The exercise was initially opposed by the many residents, particularly the high-income residents (GRA) who felt that such activity will expose them, their family and property to crime and insecurity. However, the Government was resolute on its proposed action which was carried out as planned irrespective of whose horse is gourd. Many years after, it is unequivocal to say that the speculation of the residents who resisted the action was wrong, as these neighbourhoods have proven to be safer than it was before the Government rolled in the bulldozers. Perhaps, more striking was the fact that many of these demolished perimeter fences had encroached on road setbacks, reserves and right of way, in

contravention to the Rivers State Physical Planning and Development Law No. 6 of 2003, which empowers the Development Control Department to demolish such illegal structures. Furthermore, the Government has the proclivity to provide infrastructure and amenities in the inner-city than in the peri-urban areas. Perhaps one of the striking outcomes shown is the fact that gated streets and neighbourhoods are few in the city. GRA and Mile 3 Diobu recorded 0% gating, D-Line had only 19% while the PUA had 45.5% of such enclosures. Thus, the privatization of roads, streets and access is still unpopular in the city. Nevertheless, for the few gated enclosures, personal and property safety; privacy; and control of trespassers were the three reasons mostly adduced.

4.4 Crime and Security Issues

The study revealed that 34% of the respondents are not aware of the presence of a police facility in their neighbourhood, though they consider their neighbourhood as being safe. Given that gated communities are few in the study area, many of the respondents depend on local vigilantes (non-state actors) for security. Although 32.9% depend on the Nigerian Police (state actors) for security, Police response to crime was rated effective (33.1%), not effective (23.5%), very ineffective (17.9%), very effective (10.6%) and undecided (14.9%). On government handling of security issues and crime-fighting, 14.9% residents were very positive, 34.3% say government response is quite positive, 43.6% were undecided, very few residents, 2.2% express very negative sentiments while 5.0% were quite negative. It means that most residents are indifferent to the Government handling of the security situation.



Plate 4.1: Showing Use of Security Booths
Source: Researcher's field survey, (2020).



Plate 4.2: Showing Use of Security Gates Across a Street Entrance
Source: Researcher's field survey, (2020).

Plate 4.1 shows the use of security booths. Such practices need to be discouraged by the relevant planning authorities saddled with the responsibility of regulating land use development and development control provisions.

The blockage of street entrances and gated estates as shown in Plate 4.2 was a dominant feature in the unplanned peri-urban area. While these measures seem to have curtailed movement in these neighbourhoods, they also constitute a serious security risk in the event of a breach. It also raises other safety concerns in the event of an emergency when they are not manned especially at odd hours.

5.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Security is a sine qua non for rapid social and economic development, especially for the urban area which usually contributes the highest gross domestic product of any given region. Thus, with the perceived rise in crime rate in cities, residents have provided for their security in the building, streets and neighbourhoods. Some of these practices are unsustainable and negates basic principles of urban planning and design and are mere assumptions about CPTED that may not always be correct. These include the assumption that “Eyes on the street” (Jacobs 1961) always reduces crime; the assumption that permeable streets always reduce crime; the assumption that high densities of people always reduce crime; the assumption that mixed-use development always reduces crime; the assumption that CCTV always reduces crime; and the assumption that improved street lighting always reduces crime. It has been asserted that there is a need for CPTED practitioners to think about the criminological evidence, the local conditions, and the theories from environmental criminology and not to make assumptions (Cozens, 2014).

Eckblom, (2011) declared that crime prevention is actually highly complex, but often, oversimplified. He added that practitioners should rather accept its

complexity rather than pretending it doesn't exist” (Eckblom 2011). Policymakers, planners, architects and urban designers should not insist that the connections between design and its control of crime are simple (Taylor 2003). Although, CPTED continues to represent an attractive option for individuals, communities, local, state, and national governments and international organizations, it should be acknowledged that crime and insecurity is rather complex phenomenon and should be treated as such. History has taught us that there is no such thing as an easy answer to the problems of crime and fear of crime, and CPTED is no “silver bullet.” (Cozens & Love, 2015).

From the study findings, it is clear that 84% of the respondents used burglary proof in their houses while 16% do not use burglary proof. 56.2% of the respondents had perimeter fences constructed around their houses while 43.8% did not have a perimeter fence around their houses. 23.9% of the respondents that had a perimeter fence around their building complied with the fencing regulation of see-through, while 76.1% did not have the see-through fence. Most of the streets in the study are not gated. 28% of the respondents that had their street/neighbourhood gated while 72% did not have their street/neighbourhood gated. Privacy and control of trespassers were considered as the reason for the installation of a gate at the street entrance. 59% of the respondents indicated the ability to monitor their neighbourhood/street from their house, 41% of the respondents did not have their building supporting natural surveillance. 61% of the respondents had their neighbourhood unplanned while 39% had their neighbourhood planned. 31.7% of the respondents are of the view that security is adequate in the neighbourhood. Most respondents are indifferent to the perception of security in the study. This may be due to the sensitive nature of the subject matter. Hence, 3% think it is very adequate, 18.3% say it is inadequate, 12.2% say it is very adequate while 18.5% are undecided. Again, most of the respondents depend on non-state

actors such as local vigilantes for security (45.4%) while 32.9% of the respondents depend on the Nigerian Police for security. 33.1% of the respondents rate the Police as being effective, 23.5% not effective, 17.9% very ineffective and 10.6% very effective. On government response to crime, 14.9% say it is very positive, 34.3% quite positive, 43.6% neither positive nor negative, 5.0% quite negative and 2.2% very negative.

The analysis revealed that there is a difference in the use of design elements for crime prevention between the planned inner-city and periphery neighbourhoods in the study area. While urban design elements such as natural surveillance contributed to improving crime control in the inner city, the urban periphery neighbourhoods had more defensible space and gated communities with neighbourhood associations managing security.

Although, a study carried out by Nwokaeze & Dawaye (2020) indicated that many residents of Greater Port Harcourt city have never been victims of crime and that crime is not as pervasive as reported in the media and may be more exaggerated than an actual occurrence, it is not out of place to adopt crime prevention strategies as preventive measures. This is ascribed to the perception of crime which has encouraged the architecture of fear (Agbola, 1997) in line with the statement of Borysiewicz (2010), 'prevention is better than cure'.

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study reviewed the crime prevention practices adopted by residents of Greater Port Harcourt City. As much as crime is detestable and should not be allowed to breed, all hands need to be on the desk to tackle it. Acknowledging the suggestion of Ekblom, (2011), crime is complex and should be prevented all-inclusively with an amalgam of different preventive strategies. For residents in Greater Port Harcourt City, crime prevention measures are adopted without recourse to the impact on the urban fabric

and morphology. There is therefore an urgent need for a crime victimisation survey of the city of Port Harcourt that will ask a sample of people which crimes have been committed against them over a fixed period and whether or not they have been reported to the police. Similar studies have been carried out in some African cities such as Durban, South Africa and Nairobi, Kenya under the Safer City Programme of the UN-Habitat. This will address the dearth of crime data and the lack of appropriate prevention strategies and capacities at the city level to adequately address urban insecurity and thereby contribute to the establishment of a culture of sustainable crime prevention (UN-Habitat, 2002).

Following that the research findings revealed that the use of urban design elements to control crime between the inner-city neighbourhoods and the neighbourhoods in the urban periphery of the city differed significantly. The inner-city made greater use of natural surveillance and state actors to control crime while the peri-urban area utilized target hardening and non-state actors for crime control. This study recommends an integrated crime prevention strategy for the entire city; adequate funding of security by the Government; the provision of amenities and street furniture; and the use of neighbourhood plans that promotes natural surveillance and defensible space in emerging areas. The incorporation of proper neighbourhood planning, the use of technology and community policing in crime prevention will achieve far greater long-term security for the Greater Port Harcourt metropolis and gradually phase out the unsustainable crime prevention practices adopted by residents.

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