

**TRENDS, CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF KIDNAPPING IN OVOM  
AMA-ASAA, ABIA STATE, NIGERIA, 2010-2016**

**BY**

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## **CERTIFICATION**

I certify that this work was carried out by James OKOLIE-OSEMENE in Peace and Conflict Studies Programme, Department of Peace, Security and Humanitarian Studies, Faculty of Multidisciplinary Studies, University of Ibadan, under my supervision.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this study to my great God, author and finisher of my faith, who not only sent His words of encouragement but kept me alive to see the completion of the work. His support and wisdom given to me cannot be quantified. My God is the architect/custodian of physical and spiritual security. He gave me strength, courage and focus through the following scriptures: Psalm 121, Psalm 91, Isaiah 41:10-11; Isaiah 59:1; Deuteronomy 33:23-26. I also dedicate this thesis to my Wife, Mrs Rosemary I. OKOLIE-OSEMENE and my son Damian O. OKOLIE-OSEMENE God bless you.

I remember all state and traditional security providers working tirelessly to enhance human security in various parts of the world. May God help the victims of kidnapping to recover from the trauma associated with the criminal victimisation.

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## ABSTRACT

Kidnapping is a major security threat, generating concern in urban and rural areas in Nigeria. Previous research focused on kidnapping in the context of petro-economy and militancy, with more emphasis on incidents in urban areas than rural communities. Therefore, this study examined the trends, causes, patterns and consequences of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa, Abia State, Nigeria.

Brantingham and Brantingham's Crime Pattern, Cohen and Felson's Routine Activity, and Hirschi's Social Control provided the framework. The case study and the exploratory designs were adopted. Primary and secondary sources of data were utilised. The primary data comprised ethnography, three focus group discussion sessions with elders, women and youths, 20 in-depth interviews conducted with 14 elders, a woman leader, four clergymen, and one officer of the Nigeria Security and Civil Defence Corps (NSCDC). Also, 10 key informant interviews were held with seven chiefs, a king and two repentant kidnapers. The secondary data were sourced from relevant publications. Data were subjected to content and trend analyses.

There was an increase in the incidence of kidnapping between 2010 and 2012, while the incidents decreased between 2013 and 2016, owing to foot patrols by vigilantes. The collapse of traditional values, inadequate investment in youth-centred human development, neglect of human security, gaps in functional leadership and weak social control accounted for the incidents of kidnapping. Kidnapping was not focused on highly attractive targets alone but the preventive ransom was also collected from elders, businessmen and prominent community members who were outspoken against the act of kidnapping. People were kidnapped at homes, farms, shops, churches, during ceremonies and isolated places. The kidnapers tortured those in captivity and still received ransoms after the unlucky victims lost their lives. Many people hid in nearby bushes around their homes, while some preferred to leave the community to reduce the risk of being kidnapped. Kidnapping contributed to the loss of monetary value, sources of livelihood and property to the extent that farmers became afraid of going to their farms. The measures for controlling kidnapping were both village-based and community-focused. Weekly palace council community security review was strategic in reducing kidnapping. The community-driven security strategy, an initiative by the palace council aimed at discussing community safety matters after receiving reports from stakeholders, and sustained by traditional security providers had reduced the occurrence of kidnapping.

Kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa, Abia State, Nigeria, from 2010-2016 had poor social control measures that motivated the act and undermined human development. Stakeholders should implement regularly non-formal peace education to change the mindset of the people away from kidnapping acts in the community.

**Keywords:** Community-driven security strategy, kidnapping in Nigeria, Ovom Ama-asaa, preventive ransom

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

- ACHPR - African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights
- AHRD - ASEAN Human Rights Declaration
- AMISOM - African Union forces in Somalia
- ASUU - Academic Staff Union of Universities
- BOSS - Bureau for State Security
- CDSS - Community is driven security strategy
- DOA - Dead on Arrival
- FGD- Focus Group Discussion
- GSM – Global system of mobile communication
- HATS - high attractive targets
- HRs - human rights
- HRVIC - Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission
- IDI – In-depth interview
- KfR - Kidnapping for Ransom
- KII- Key informant interview
- MEND - Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta
- NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
- NINLAN – National Institute for Nigerian Languages
- NSCDC – Nigerian Security and Civil Defence Corps
- PCCSR - Palace Council's community security review
- RAT - Routine activity theory
- SADF - South African Defence Force
- SSC - State Security Council
- UDHR - Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- UDSS - University Demonstration Secondary School

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

The existence of highly organised criminal groups across the world is responsible for the rising security crises that undermine livelihoods in affected places (Hakim, 1980; Tamuno, 1991; Alemika, 2013; Hove, 2013; Adzande & Gyuse, 2017; Albert, 2018; Lar, 2018; Alemika, 2018; Oriola, 2018; Obarisiagbon & Aderinto, 2018; Ayodele, 2019; Nwolise, 2019; Hudson & Hodgson, 2020; Nwadike-Fasugba, 2020; Ilori, 2020; Ezeogidi, Okezie & Okezie, 2020; Ponce & Andresen, 2020; Tade, et al, 2020; Albanese, 2021; Estévez-Soto, 2021; Ferreira, 2021; Grana & Windell, 2021; Kim, John & Hipp, 2021; Kessler & Reinecke, 2021; Tar & Safana, 2021; Wallace, 2021). Because of social problems associated with kidnapping, containment measures are required to curb the causes of security threats. The spread of kidnapping, which is categorised as gang criminality affects different groups in various countries where criminal gangs view kidnapping as a profitable trade, like Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Italy, Mexico, Philippines, Australia and Russia, which have been hosting the notorious kidnapping industry since the late 1960s, to the extent that insurance of kidnapping has been outlawed in Colombia, Germany and Italy due to the commercialisation of terror associated with the act (Awake, 1999; Fink & Pingle, 2014; Pires et al., 2016; Oyemwinmina & Osazuwa, 2016; Oriola, 2018; Ponce & Andresen, 2020). Kidnappers are known for their violent attacks on their victims who suffer trauma in the process.

Some people became enslaved after being kidnapped and ferried to the New World from their communities in Angola to Mexico in 1619, while some of the slaves died because of starvation, terror and attack by pirates during the journeys (Shipp, 2019; Agozino, 2021). The kidnapping of those energetic people of Africa led to their

displacement as they could not return to their villages. Through the points of departure in Senegambia, Sierra Leone, Bight of Benin, Bight of Biafra, Central Africa and Southeast Africa, the victims of the kidnapping of this nature in their millions worked and lived as slaves from 1501 to 1875.

Globally, 2006 is known for the high incidents of kidnapping cases with over 25,000 reports (Lechners, 2007; Phillips, 2011). Offenders in the Philippines demanded payment of ransoms with cheques from relatives to reduce the risk of apprehension by security providers (Pshisva and Suarez, 2006). As a result of the profit-making nature of this gang criminality, kidnappers engage in this impunity since only one per cent of the crime of kidnapping for ransom cases attracted punishment with conviction and detention after prosecution as from 1990, to the extent that in Colombia, about 99 per cent of kidnappers escaped justice (Merkling & Davis, 2001). African countries suffer the insecurity arising from kidnapping. For instance, rising incidents of kidnapping in Kenya's Rift Valley region shows how local communities indulge in criminality. This rising trend has also been linked to the weakness of the criminal justice system in affected states. The weak criminal justice system contributed to this ugly trend.

The routine nature of kidnapping shows the organisation and evolution of the crime amongst criminal groups. During the 1980s, various factors motivated this crime. However, the spread of criminal victimisation in this 21st-century Nigeria shows that curbing this safety threat has the capacity of salvaging society from hopelessness (Olaniyan, 2017).

Kidnappers no longer concentrate on criminally victimising and extorting politicians and their relatives, celebrity individuals, expatriates, kings, clergy, highly placed individuals, film producers and other members of the movie industry, but shifted attention to target low-income earners such as businessmen/women, teachers, artisans, students, low-income civil servants, corpses in transit along highways or while lying in state for the funeral to force family members to pay the ransom before releasing the victims from captivity and ahead of burial rites. Although lucky victims often gain freedom when the ransom is paid or through the tip-off of law enforcement agencies, some people never return home alive after the offenders would have collected ransom.

It was not only in Niger Delta that expatriates were victims of kidnapping, but other states including Abia State which recorded 55 reported fatal incidents (Isumonah,



2013; Ukoji, 2016). Because kidnapers and security operatives exchange gunfire on several occasions, Abia State fared negatively, with deaths recoded on both sides. Events across the country showed the notoriety of kidnapers in extorting families that are not aware of the death of loved ones in captivity.

Indeed, Igbo traditional society did not tolerate any form of gang criminality which later became an attribute of life daily in Ovom Ama-asaa. Okafor (1992) posits that Igbo traditional society values and prioritises the rights people have from birth, to own property and live a peaceful life without molestation, and that people's lives if their right is conferred on them by Ala – goddess of the earth—who protects life. It is therefore expected to attract condemnation when people kill others for whatever reason.

Ovom Ama-asaa is in Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State, Southeast, Nigeria. The oral tradition of Ngwa people, explains that “ama-asaa” refers to seven villages that make up the community (Ovom Ama-asaa). The villages are - Mbaraikoro, Mbaraugba, Umuokenya, Umuokoro, Obikabia, Epomiri, Umuanunu. People can locate the community from Aba, a commercial town in Igboland, and hosts many ethnic groups. Ovom Ama-asaa is predominantly farmers but also engage in trade, with few primary and secondary schools found in the area. The community hosts the National Institute for Nigerian Languages (NINLAN), which inherited the assets of the former Federal School of Arts and Science that existed before 1993. Ovom people are part of the Igbo sub-group called “Ngwa” and accommodate non-indigenes. The sons and daughters of the community were trained to value diversity and honour other ethnic groups, recognising their contributions to community development which remains unparalleled. Unfortunately, with the return of some militants from the Niger Delta, the entire community became insecure because of the way they started kidnapping.

As kidnapers became more emboldened and incidents escalated, hundreds of people were kidnapped in the community, such as Business owners, village chiefs, bank workers, public/civil servants, NINLAN workers and scholars, etc. Thus, the linkage between human rights abuses and kidnapping played out. The question is not whether kidnapers violate the rights of victims, but the extent of such violation is worth studying because human dignity is usually at stake when they execute their criminal

plans. Kidnapping breaches the safety of humans by undermining their welfare, survival, freedom to move about as desired. It is difficult for the victims to escape or feed when they are chained at a place. The starvation, fear and uncertainty that characterise the period of captivity force relatives to negotiate for ransom without delay.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

As a global phenomenon, kidnapping for ransom creates security concerns across rural and urban communities. Despite this, several academic works concentrate on the climate of terror created by kidnapers in cities (Ikporukpo, 2007; Akpan, 2010; Ukandu, 2011; Attoh, 2012; Alemika, 2013; Out, 2013; Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014; Ilechukwu et al., 2015; Nwobueze et al, 2016; Adzande & Gyuse, 2017; Adzande, Gyuse & Atser, 2018; Ayodele, 2019; Tar & Safana, 2021). Kidnapping became one of the prevalent security problems in the Niger Delta where secrete cults and militia groups extort people (Nwobueze, 2015; Nwobueze et al, 2017; Aniche, 2019; Albert, Danjibo & Albert, 2020). The studies that focus on rural parts of Niger Delta are based on the petro-economy perspective that neglects the agrarian community context of kidnapping for ransom like the case of Ovom Ama-Asaa in Abia State.

Some works quantified the level of traffic levels and road networks that influence incremental wave of criminality which is traceable to traffic congestion (Johnson & Bowers, 2000; Armitage, 2007; Groff et al., 2014). Several published and unpublished works established the linkages between the sophistication of armed groups and the concentration of criminal activities in urban communities which host rich families, without much ethnographic study on the extortion of rural people by kidnapers to the extent that neighbourhood insecurity occasioned by kidnapping remains a threat (Mejabi, 2012; Essien & Effiong, 2013; Inyang and Abraham, 2013; Nwobueze et al, 2016; Aniche, 2019; Ponce & Andresen, 2020; Tar & Safana, 2021). The foregoing indicates that previous research privileged the urban perspective over the rural dimension by focusing on kidnapping in the context of petro-economy and militancy.

This study examined the trends, causes, patterns and consequences of kidnapping and how offenders target strategic advantages in negotiating for ransom with victims and

their relatives using different models. Ovom Ama-asaa, is a rural community where the presence of security agencies was poor.

### **1.3 Research questions**

The following questions guided the study:

1. What caused kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa?
2. Which group of people were targeted by kidnappers?
3. To what extent were the rights of victims violated?
4. What were the consequences of kidnapping on the community?
5. How effective are the measures for taming the act of kidnapping?

### **1.4 Aim and objectives of the study**

The study examined the trends, causes, patterns and consequences of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa, Abia State. The main objectives were to:

1. determine the factors responsible for the occurrence of kidnapping in the community;
2. identify those that kidnappers targeted in Ovom;
3. explore the extent to which the rights of victims were violated;
4. examine the consequences of kidnapping on the community; and
5. examine the effectiveness of the measures for taming kidnapping.

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

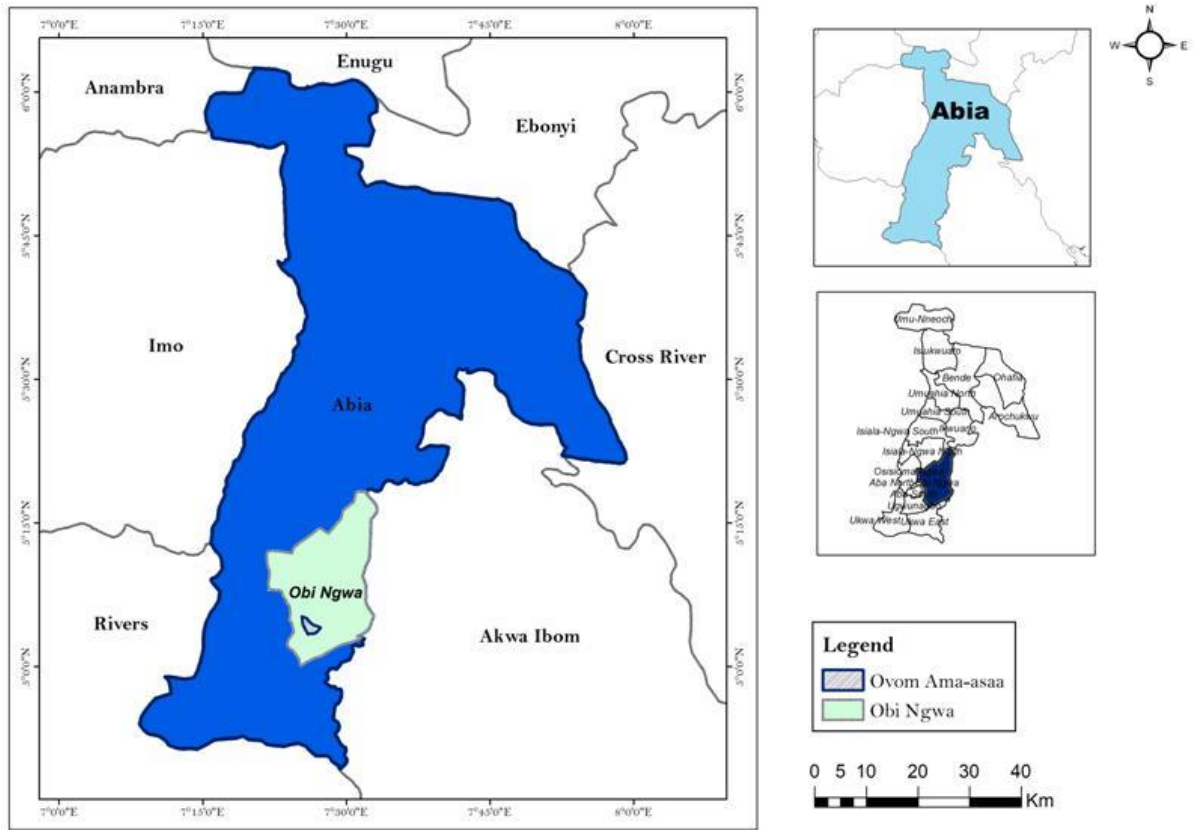
Research that focuses on kidnapping trends and consequences in Ovom offers more insight into the security issues that influence the peacefulness of the society through the understanding of scholars and students on how kidnapping undermines human security in rural communities. The thesis is a contribution to teaching and learning of peace, conflict, security and criminology and security studies, as well as neighbourhood level research on community safety which localises a security problem of the contemporary world.

Scholars, students, policy makers and practitioners researching emerging security threats in Nigeria and other troubled states require the findings from this study.

This thesis has knowledge development relevance because with citizens engaging in gang criminality particularly those in neighbourhoods, it has been able to establish the extent and consequences of human rights abuses by kidnappers in a community that does not have any police station. In addition, the effectiveness of the communal security regime as a response to the activities of offenders is relevant to scholars and those interrogating theoretical issues in peace, security, conflict studies and criminology. With the trends, causes, patterns and consequences of the act, scholars of peace studies, criminology, sociology, strategic studies, geography, and security studies would be able to engage in theoretical development and understand the nature of ransom-focused kidnapping. The weakness of security agencies' presence and lack of police stations demanded attention to show how the people coped with the crime.

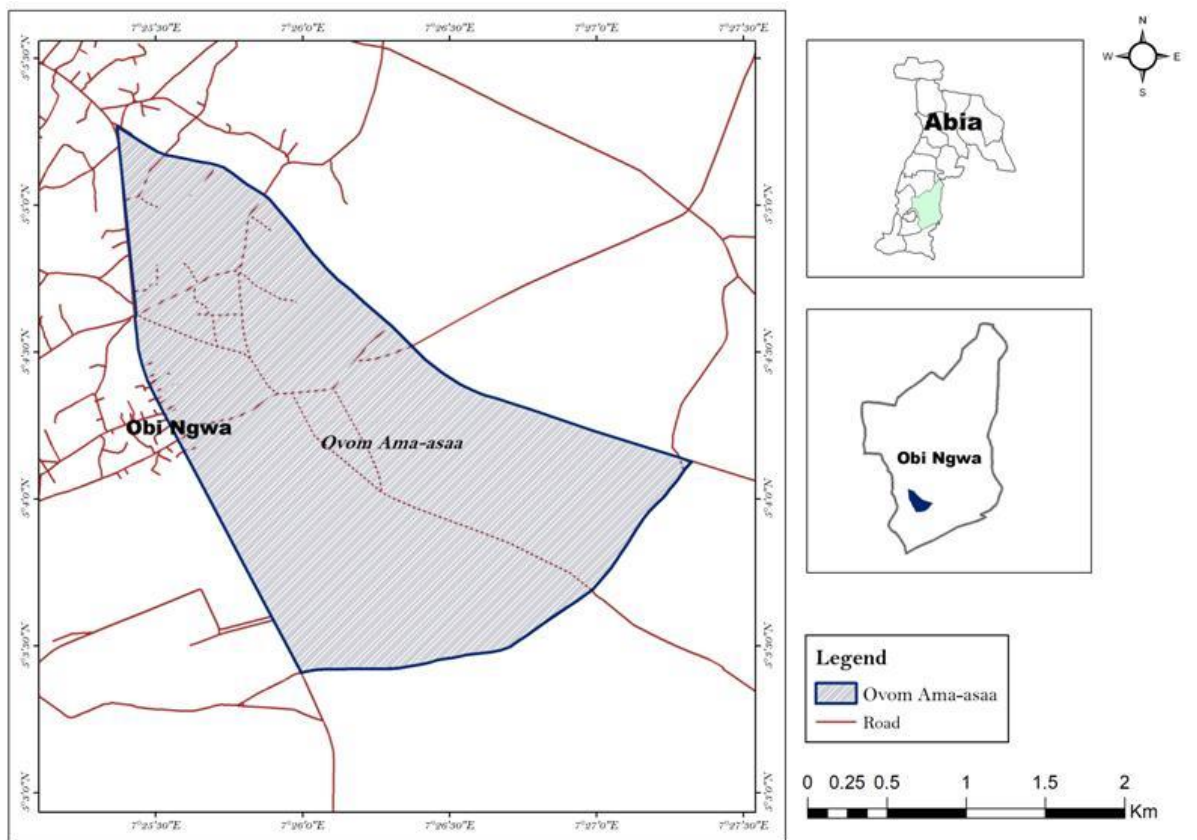
### **1.6 Scope of the study**

This study focused on intimidation and extortion of people in Ovom, Abia State, Nigeria by kidnappers, with emphasis on the trends, causes, patterns and consequences of kidnapping. It is a community that experienced rural-based criminality especially the criminal victimisation of kidnapping. Although individuals started copying the act from 2005 in Nigeria's Delta region, 2010 was a significant year because offenders in Ovom began to adopt the act as a way of life and source of livelihood, with a remarkable increase across the villages in Ovom, the terminal date in 2016 was the time that reports of such acts decreased, as some fugitive offenders started returning during night hours to negotiate with elders for pardon and reintegration in the community.



Map 1.1. The location of Ovom Ama-asaa in Abia State

Source: Researcher's drawing



Map 1.2: Ovom in Abia State.

Source: Researcher's drawing



Plate 1.1. The entrance of Ovom-Ama-Asaa.

Source: Field research 2016-18.

### **1.7. Operational definition of key terms**

**Kidnapping:** This means the illegal use of force to seize individuals by forcing them to pay the ransom, after transporting them to isolated areas of captivity.

**Human rights violations (HRVs):** the physical and psychological abuse of people to injure their personality. This affects their human dignity.

**Ransom:** This refers to the amount of money that people pay while in captivity to enable kidnapers to grant them freedom.

**Preventive ransom:** This is the amount of money that people especially targets pay to the offenders that want to kidnap them to prevent the act. The essence of preventive ransom is to avoid harm and prevent being transported to an unknown destination by kidnapers.

### **1.8 Limitations of the study**

While starting this research, it was not easy getting people to interview, because the work required that the researcher interview victims of kidnapping and their relatives since they desired to be anonymous. They even suspected that the researcher had links with security agencies or wanted to get information from them for policing purposes. They refused to mention names on many occasions due to fear of the unknown. But they felt relaxed after they were convinced with assurances of the academic focus of the study, having no links with the state security providers. Earlier, the majority of the respondents had concerns and were not interested in participating in the research as soon as “kidnapping” was mentioned. They thought there was a connection between the researcher and law enforcement agencies to the extent that their fears received adequate explanation before the commencement of the study with them.

If not for the intervention of chiefs and other stakeholders that understood the academic relevance of such research, community residents were not willing to cooperate. So the researcher had to present to them the student identity card and letter of introduction. Respondents did not permit the scholar to take photos due to fears of



security forces or kidnappers. The lack of police officers in the community made the researcher visit the Area Command that is miles away from Ovom.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1. Clarification of concepts**

##### **2.1.1. Kidnapping**

As a concept, kidnapping has a notable explanation problem, but scholars attempted to explain what it implies. Greenawalt (1989:92) notes that kidnapping is a situation where victims are unlawfully carried away from their comfort zone to the harsh or risky environment of captivity, where they are threatened with harm until they comply with the demands of perpetrators. In addition, kidnapping is the crime of fraudulently carrying targets away by force, and migrating them to other places to hinder their liberty to receive desired ransom (Pharaoh, 2005; Schroeder, 2006). It is what occurs when people are illegally imprisoned and hidden away from relatives and associates who are usually forced to pay ransom being the victim is set free (Okoli & Agada, 2014). Kidnapping occurs in form of a sudden attack through which perpetrators use violence to threaten harm on the victims to facilitate their unlawful collection of money (Hamilton, 1980; Pharaoh, 2005; Attoh, 2012; Onuoha, 2019). It shows that people kidnapped are carried to locations they cannot easily identify or navigate even when set free except when a helper or relative finds them, contact with the victim's relatives.

Force is always used by kidnapers to torture unlucky people. As organised criminality, perpetrators utilise threats to intimidate victims. Kidnapping creates a platform that makes them capture and transport unsuspecting individuals to hidden locations for them to coercively lock captives until their demands are given priority through negotiation (Akpan, 2010). The aim of this crime is centred on getting ransom, after physically injuring victims or forcing them to have intercourse with the offenders

against their wish (Schroeder, 2006). The similarity between kidnapping and hostage-taking is the coercive abduction of victims, with the help of weapons to frighten the targets. Kidnapping is different due to the abduction of people for the achievement of interests that are not focused on the payment of ransom, and such goals may be political, religious, economic or social. Etebu et al (2010:180) regard hostage-taking as the “forceful adoption of people to create scenarios for the negotiation of demands”, for political or other reasons. By showcasing their capability to demand certain things, hostage-taking enables offenders to receive the attention of policy makers the moment they use coercion or expression of grievances to avoid the heavy weight of the law (Alexander & Klein, 2009; Alexander and Klein, 2010; McMains and Mullins, 2015). Victims are taken hostage to gain an advantage (Okoli & Agada 2014). Hostage-taking sometimes causes protests, and this is the difference between kidnapping and hostage-taking considering how a focus on policy changes or actions is the priority of individuals taking hostages, while kidnappers aim at extortion of people for monetary gains. Notably, offenders are rewarded with ransom which sustains the motivation to commit more atrocities. The fatal nature of kidnapping occurs when family members are not able to pay the demanded ransom.

### **2.1.2. Meaning of rural community**

Across the globe, there are rural people in all countries and governments play a significant role in classifying rural areas. In Africa, rural communities have similar attributes namely high poverty rate, low productivity, nearness to nature and subsistence farming. How societies use development parameters to categorise rural areas is different across cultures, which is the reason countries in the west do not view rural communities the way developing states do (Nwunasungazi, no date).

Notable challenges that affect rural areas are centred on underdevelopment. According to Yenshu (2012) to development refers to activities initiated to enable societies to realise the desired sustainable livelihoods following their values for a better future. Some scholars explain rural community according to the human development perspective of the United Nations which view such areas as having low population growth. Many rural communities lack industrialisation, resources, and mechanised agricultural production of food which makes food easily available in urban areas (Anon, 2010; Reis, 2017). Socio-economic activities that characterise life in cities is

the opposite of the situation in rural areas that do not witness such development, thereby showing how livelihoods are limited. In the words of Yarhere (2003) the classification of social groups shows the significance of kinship ties and family lineage system in rural communities and is narrow but wide in urban communities that do not consider kinship ties (Anon, 2010).

Low movement of vehicles, subsistence farming and distance from government agencies all show the development issues in rural communities. Yahere's (2003) findings reveal that inadequate social amenities characterise the living conditions of people in rural areas, without much provision by government and international companies (Anon, 2010). The problem makes them rely on self-help and nature for survival on daily basis. Because of this, there are times when multinationals execute rural electrification to alleviate their suffering. As noted earlier, the remote location of rural areas exempts them from urban-cities type of traffic that is caused by high population.

In terms of the criminal justice system, there are rural areas that lack the presence of police personnel with distant courts, thereby creating an opportunity for informal criminal justice as an alternative to state-centric enactments (Daly, 2020). Also, poor policing that makes rural areas vulnerable to risk explains why criminal groups establish safe havens to threaten urban areas (where stability securitization is highly demanding), from rural neighbourhoods (Nyakato et al, 2021). As far as migration is concerned, both the working class and the unemployed are attracted by urban centres from rural communities with little economic opportunities and lower human and vehicular movement to cities that are densely populated (Ilo, 2016).

Apart from access to health facilities being connected, community neighbourhood knowledge of safety is not as sophisticated in rural areas like the urban communities where people have more protective gadgets and a high presence of law enforcement agencies. Businesses are less competitive in rural areas where marketing is not common, unlike urban areas that experience competitive businesses. The foregoing security, migration and business attributes of urban areas explain why Udeke (1995) maintains that rural communities do not witness the remarkable and rapid influx of traders, labourers and workers and increase of accommodation problems with the high

cost of living like urban areas where unemployment, the building of slums and explosion of crimes are common.

Unlike urban areas where people face environmental challenges that are traceable to modernization in terms of population increase, an infrastructural transformation like the building of large markets, modern communication facilities, industries, flyovers, and dumping of solid waste along major roads/streets, rural communities do not always experience such problems (Jibril & Abah, 2016).

A notable feature of Ovom is weak mobile network coverage that frustrates the users of internet/broadband services and sometimes hinders voice calls. Because of this, conducting research online in the community is usually difficult.

### **2.1.3. Human rights**

Explanation of the meaning of human rights is important considering how there is a nexus between the concept and kidnapping. Whenever people are kidnapped, their rights are abused. The dimensions of human rights expanded since the modern world where the survival of humans is one of the major priorities of state actors. However, achieving the goals of states in promoting human rights depends on various efforts including the type of government and the role of leaders who are expected to cooperate in the interest of all (Eugen, 2007). The rights of humans are norms recognised by people to regulate the activities of leaders and followers (McCarthy, 2009). In the words of Henkin (1989), rights regard the legitimacy of people to claim their safety and freedom from the state they find themselves in. This shows why individuals are the points of reference in Canada, but the community gains more recognition when any issue of right is mentioned in Africa (Akuffo, 2013). It is not disputable that African states address such issues collectively and believe in community rights protection.

The universal nature of these rights means people's rights cannot be denied to safeguard their worth and not that society is doing them any favour (Henkin, 1989; Gonzalez, 2015). Being rooted like man, rights of people support the respect of all and concern for all persons to make liberty a significant factor in human relations (Bagde, 2014). International legal instruments also recognise the existence of rights such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the International Bill of Rights

(Yusuf, 1997). When people are allowed to reap the benefits of humanity, it is regarded as human rights (Ajomo & Okagbue, 1991).

Both United Nations and London and Baldwin-Ragaven defined human rights as inherent rights and without which people cannot function as human beings (Pate, 1997). London and Baldwin-Ragaven defined human rights as “universally applicable social or material entitlements, essential to fulfilling fundamental needs, which can be claimed by people from their society based on [their] humanity” (cited in Mitchell, 2015:39).

Merriam-Webster (2009) writes that ‘right’ is described as something to which one has a just claim, indicating the power or privilege to which one is justly entitled, something that one may properly claim as due; while Curzon *et al* (2007) define it as an interest which will be recognised and protected by a rule of law, respect for which is a legal duty, violation of which is a legal wrong (cited in Olomola, 2013:9).

Categories of rights are social-economic and civil rights, influencing all areas of rights including culture (Obe, 1997:73). These rights are conferred on individuals by natural law and are entitled under being rational. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) makes provision for the protection of rights of individuals irrespective of race, religion or culture. Babawale (2007:78) asserts that “the view concerning rights of people originated from laws provided by nature” for the benefit of humans everywhere, and must be unchangeable throughout human existence, therefore, violating any right would amount to the abuse of man’s existence. As a social phenomenon, human rights have their origin in antiquity (Eugen, 2007:416). Olomola (2013) also adds that human rights refer to rights that are essential to life as human beings – basic standards needed by people from all walks of life to live a dignified life. Dignity in this regard entails worth, respect, recognition and value for human existence, preventing every threat to the comfort and sustainable livelihoods.

Human rights present themselves as standards that all societies are required to uphold, although human diversity indicates that societies are different in remarkable ways: culturally, politically, religiously, ideologically, geographically, technologically, economically among others (Etinson, 2015). As an issue that is domiciled within the contemporary conception of peace, modern human rights developed from the need to protect the inherent dignity and inalienable rights of all members of the human family

from oppression and the need to set minimum standards for a civilised existence (Onyekpere, 2000:1; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948).

Every member of society deserved to live and their right to livelihood is the most fundamental one due to how all rights depend on it (Lokulo-Sodipe, 2010). Ajomo and Okagbue (1991) view unhealthy and unproductive activities of people as being capable of abusing their inalienable rights. When the state lacks the needed political will to promote human rights using the rule of law, people are likely to take advantage of such weakness.

## **2.2. Literature Review**

### **2.2.1. The causes and effects of kidnapping**

Although crime is not the preserve of low-income people, those that live in cities like Lagos are the “underclass that lack good social condition, and also disposed to anti-social behaviour owing to lack of social security” (Onyechoa, 1994; Albert, 2003:56; Thom-Otuya, 2016; Han & Piquero, 2021). Individuals or groups engage in crime against the state, property, persons, morality, public order thereby causing security threats and human rights abuses (Albert, 2018; Ayodele, 2019; Grana & Windell, 2021). The crime of kidnapping is one of man’s problems associated with security, peace, development (Eugen, 2007; Diaconu, 1993; Tar & Safana, 2021). The problem of insecurity shows how the government’s effort to monopolise violence is undermined by criminal groups (Ferreira, 2021). Existing literature shows that the phenomenon of kidnapping which uses violence to manipulate victims and their relatives affects the stability of communities with attendant implications for social cohesion. Studies have been conducted on the causes of kidnapping, which is regarded as a crime. Scholars maintain that various factors are responsible for the prevalence of crime incidents in every society. According to Albanese (2000:415), about three conditions predicate the development of organised criminal act namely, opportunity factors, the immediate environment, and the group’s access to the skills required to commit the crime in which they use force or threats. Phillips (2009:200) also underscores the need to identify the location where the kidnapping occurred for any rescue effort to be productive.

In this regard, the significance of geographical location and date of kidnapping cannot be overemphasised. Yun (2009:7) argues that the location may be significantly related to the chance of hostage's survival or execution; while the date will enable people to compare new incidents with older cases. It can be argued that some scenes or locations of kidnapping are known for fatalities, brutalities by kidnappers or even high ransom payment by relatives before securing the release of victims. While some areas are prone to the incidents of kidnapping, others only motivate the act by harbouring individuals that use the area as a base to plan and execute their nefarious acts. It should be added that the assertion by Gupte (2017), that cities have become the locations where a range of criminal violence is concentrated, as security provision in many cities across the developing world is fluid, is apt considering how many kidnapers take advantage of the urban environment to carry out their acts of criminality.

In a related scholarly argument, Taylor (2016b:2) identifies the three components of a criminal act which can be summarised as the anatomy of the criminal act, thus: the desire to commit the crime, the opportunity that facilitates the committing of the act, and the ability to commit the crime. This ability can also be reinforced by the expert knowledge to execute the crime. The foregoing is apt based on the fact that the ability to commit crime aids perpetrators when the opportunity is readily available. The author argues that the victim is dead on arrival (DOA). The dead on arrival problem may be a result of the victim's poor awareness due to the unexpected occurrence of the incident. Also, in the context of kidnapping, the desire to kidnap people and demand ransom enable gangs or individuals to target the people they wish to kidnap.

The use of small arms and light weapons has been a major reason why most incidents of kidnapping turn deadly. The causes of kidnapping can be located within the existing types which can also offer more insight into the rationales of kidnapping. Ukandu (2011) outlines some of the reasons why kidnapping is rampant in society namely, moral and spiritual bankruptcy, cultism and "oda-eshi" phenomenon, unemployment and poverty, governmental insincerity and poor development, arms proliferation among others. According to Turner (1998) and elaborated by Pharaoh (2005), Stubbert, Pires and Guerette (2015), the four notable key rationales for kidnapping are (a) kidnapping for financial gains without any form of political consideration (b) kidnapping without any political or monetary motive (c) kidnapping for monetary benefits with political motivation and benefits (also see Hamilton, 1980), (d)



kidnapping for political benefits without any monetary motivation, all affecting groups and individuals. The aforementioned classification indicates that any act of kidnapping has criminal, political and economic reasons. Depending on the interest of offenders, the criminal tendency drives the action in most cases because it is aimed at satisfying the interest of the perpetrator. The foregoing corroborates the assertion by Oyemwinmina and Osazuwa (2016) that the main causes of kidnapping are unemployment, poverty, the quest for prosperity and eroded societal values. According to the authors:

The craving for materialism at all costs in the country generally has led to the high wave of crime in the country. People are ready to do anything to get rich and be celebrated in society and a lot of the youth considered kidnapping as one of the short means to actualize this purpose (Oyemwinmina & Osazuwa, 2016:208).

It should be added that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons would have been very low if not for the eroded values in contemporary society where money determines many things. So, this quest for material things easily gives people the motivation to join kidnapping gangs. But kidnapping would have been relatively low if not for the attractive and seemingly lucrative nature of the criminal enterprise in society. Phillip (2009) notes that the premise that kidnaps for ransom is regarded as a business because money is the primary motive behind the crime is weak and subject to case studies that are yet to be scientifically proven. Notwithstanding, there have been findings on the economic motivations for kidnapping. In rare cases, the urgent need for money to finance the purchase of drugs by drug addicts has also been identified as one of the causes of kidnapping for ransom (Yang, Wu & Huang, 2007 cited in Philips, 2009:198).

Officially, the notable types of kidnapping are (i) kidnappings of firms' owners, which include kidnappings in which the victim owns at least part of a firm; (ii) kidnap involving firms' top management, including those involving victims who are board members or managers; (iii) those involving firms' top and middle management, including the senior management team and division managers; and (iv) firm-related kidnapping incidents such as the ones that victims are business owners, managers, employees on full time and contract appointments (Pshiswa & Suarez 2006:9-10). These types of kidnapping can further be classified under kidnapping for economic

benefits, political reasons, and struggle for positions in offices due to the status people desire.

In addition, Ukoji (2016:11) posits that, as a human security problem, the crime of kidnapping is easily motivated by the availability of arms in the hands of illegal users, particularly civilians in most parts of Nigeria. This is also similar to the argument by Hull et al (2006) states that the proliferation of arms contributes to anarchy by causing higher levels of destruction through increasing lethal firepower and the creation of a vicious cycle whereby competing militias engage in an arms race for dominance. Consequently, they can do this through their influence in the security market.

The notable causes of kidnapping are also encouragement and urgings to commit the crime of kidnapping. In his work on encouragements to crime, Greenawalt (1989:110-121) posits that “the crime of criminal solicitation” includes desires and motivations to commit crimes, and under the Model Penal Code, a person is guilty of criminal solicitation if to promote the commission of a crime he/she encourages or requests others to engage in specific conduct that would constitute such crime. The author also argues that the general urgings to indulge in criminal acts have effects, but they are usually less likely to produce results than specific encouragements, and when they do lead someone to commit a crime, to the extent their role cannot easily be traceable. The foregoing is apt considering how the encouragement to kidnap people is more dangerous than the urgings to become a kidnapper, based on the fact that no man is born a kidnapper but only motivated by either peers or sponsors who usually equip perpetrators with arm or dangerous weapons to command obedience from the victims. There are times when victims are threatened to choose between life and death when they are given an ultimatum to convince their relatives to pay the ransom as soon as possible.

The influence of peer groups on the behaviour of youth cannot be overemphasised. This can also be seen as one of the causes of kidnapping in most societies. This corroborates the motivations to participate in crime as noted by Greenawalt (1989). According to Ojeme (2011:11) “human beings live and interact with social groups. The culture of the group in which a person is embedded inevitably imparts on his/her behaviour.” The foregoing explains why young people are involved in kidnapping

especially when their peer group introduces them to the criminal behaviour of identifying and targeting people to be kidnapped.

Historically, in pre-colonial Nigeria, slave raid was one of the causes of kidnapping, a strategy that violated the rights of slaves most of whom were captured by force. For instance, Isichei (1970:48) notes that most Igbo slaves were obtained by kidnapping and facilitated by the Arochukwu Oracle; as some Igbo communities made war on each other to kidnap members of rival communities. The role of slavery in promoting the practice of kidnapping which created general insecurity of life cannot be overemphasised (Talbot, 1926). Additionally, Captain Adams who made ten slaving voyages to Africa between 1786 and 1800, noted that about 16,000 Igbo slaves were sold annually including Olaudah Equiano who was earlier kidnapped with his sister at the age of ten in 1755 (Isichei, 1970:46). The prevalence of kidnapping rather exposed some people especially women and children to danger. The foregoing shows the relationship between kidnapping and trade in humans for economic gains and to punish offenders or enemies.

Also, Basden (1921:105) highlights the prevalence of kidnapping which shows the dangers of travelling alone. Kidnapping created an atmosphere of insecurity and made people rethink long-distance trade unless those that travelled in convoy. Consequently, travelling in convoy gave psychological strength to traders who travelled far away from their communities in Igbo society. It then meant that those who moved alone exposed themselves to the risk of being kidnapped and sold into slavery. The slaving voyages point to the fact that the kidnapping which facilitated slavery was well planned and executed act during the period.

Revenge can also be another cause of kidnapping. People can decide to plan kidnapping others when they tend to avenge for what they see as injury or wrongdoing. For instance around 1440 AD, then Oba of Benin, Ewuare the great, revenged for his banishment by capturing some rulers and forcing his captives to pay tribute to him (Egharevba, 1968:13). The foregoing further reveals that people can become victims of kidnapping when the perpetrator is aggrieved over perceived wrongdoing affecting the perpetrator. The foregoing corroborates the assertion by Likata and Odawa (2015:52) that in contemporary societies, the motives for kidnapping are socio-cultural (including

religious and moral), economic and political, with revenge being the major socio-cultural motive for kidnappings in the affected area.

Across the world, causation shows that different factors have been identified as the causes of kidnapping. They can be economic, political, social or even religious as the case may be. The lucrative nature of kidnapping made scholars describe it as a business (Hamilton, 1980; Briggs, 2001; Philips, 2009; Tar & Safana, 2021). Assiago (2003:438) classifies the major causes of delinquency namely, social, institutional-oriented causes and environmental factors that are usually the main features of urban areas. The author argues that “social exclusion arising from long periods of unemployment, or marginalisation, dropping out of school or illiteracy, and the lack of socialisation in the family are the most recurring factors responsible for delinquency.” In the case of Niger Delta, the prevalence of youth restiveness and confrontations between the oil companies that are backed by the government, and the host communities, made Albert (2011:59) describe Nigeria’s oil sector as the most volatile sector of the economy. The restiveness led to self-determination struggles and the execution of Ogoni spokesman and human rights activist, Ken Saro Wiwa in 1995 by the regime of General Sani Abacha (Aghalino, 2011, 2009, Agbu, 2004; Albert, 2003; Ezeilo, 2007; Ezirim, 2011). According to Essien and Ben (2013), various forms of crime, in which kidnapping is involved, emerged as a consequence of high incidence of poverty, absence of infrastructures and deprivations of the locals and oil communities in Nigeria (Okengwu, 2011; Aniche, 2019). The foregoing corroborates the assertion by Ilechukwu, Uchem and Asogwa, (2015:28) that the inability of the government to look into the root causes of dissatisfaction, anger and agitation among various groups ethnic groups in Nigeria also contributed to the prevalence of kidnapping which was also popularised by Niger Delta militants whose agitations were based on poverty and social deprivation, unemployment in varying degrees. It should be added that this took a turn for the worse when the majority of unrepentant militants deviated from genuine agitations over perceived marginalisation to kidnap people for ransom from oil workers and the privileged. This made Dzurgba (2006:35) identify the widespread nature and manifestations of youth violence such as “stress, distress, depression, frustration, anxiety, pain and anguish which portray youths as local terrorists through their malicious act of kidnapping.

The aforementioned cause of kidnapping shows that rising poverty and lack of access to food explain how have contributed to the menace which violates human rights in parts of Africa where natural disasters and violent conflicts hamper sustainable livelihoods (Adegbamigbe, 1997). It then means that there is poor distribution of required food kinds of stuff in the society where most citizens usually struggle to come to grips with the purchasing power to enable them to provide for their families. According to Mohammed-Katerere (2011:57), existing frameworks of governance in Africa are “poorly equipped to deal with the challenges of climate change, inequitable distribution of resources, growing food insecurity and water scarcity.” This is further worsened by poor policy formulation and politicisation of government projects.

Additionally, other motives that drive the urgings for kidnapping are noteworthy. According to Alexander and Klein (2009:16), the motives can be divided into ‘expressive’ (that is, an effort to voice and/or publicise a grievance or express a frustrated emotion) and ‘instrumental’ (that is, to obtain a particular outcome such as ransom). However, the scholars have been able to point the difficulty in identifying a single motive in any case. The National Crime Research Centre, (2014) is also in agreement with the explanation. This study argues that expressive kidnapping is common to those involving political agitations, resource-based conflicts, marginalisation of minority groups, intergroup conflicts, boundary disputes among others. Also, instrumental kidnapping involves those that target wealthy people and political elites in society.

The cost of living is also a predictor of kidnappings. According to Väyrynen (1971), scholars believe that the rise in the cost of living has been verified as the more rapid the rise in the cost of living, the more kidnappings. It is noteworthy that the author did not elaborate on how the rise in the cost of living aggravates kidnapping. This would have put the assertion in proper contexts. But it should be stated that the problem of the cost of living is peculiar to developing societies which sometimes have a record-high cost of living with a declining standard of living, including Nigerian communities. This can be said to be the case concerning poverty, economic-related motives for kidnapping in which increases the urgings for the act. Furthermore, a group that allows the high cost of living to push them into crime.

Schneider (2002:8-9) summarised the aforementioned argument that the two most significant variables that have influenced crime rates in the past and are expected to be highly influential on future rates are macro-economic factors (such as the strength of the economy, unemployment rates, consumer spending levels) and demographic factors, especially the number of males in the crime-prone age group who are mostly youth. Consequently, the author further maintains that the massive employment and wage increment recorded in periods of economic boom discourages the commission of a crime, while economic downturns aggravate the unemployment crisis and mass poverty, which motivate people to be involved in criminal behaviour. The motivating economic factors contributing to kidnap activities are not easily curbed because of the ransoms that people pay. Also, the hasty use of the money generated from this criminal act by the perpetrators usually makes some people adopt it as a legitimate business. Reports on suspects apprehended reveal how many security agencies caught them at home in their vehicles while enjoying the money received from the act.

It has been argued that the lower classes in society and unemployed youth are also behind violent crimes such as kidnappings; and this explains the establishment of the Youth Empowerment Fund and the Uwezo Fund in Kenya for creating economic opportunities for the lower class people and unemployed youth who could engage in kidnappings for ransom (National Crime Research Centre, 2014:16). The foregoing affirms the position of existing studies on kidnapping and associated human rights violations especially in a situation where urban or rural poverty, absence of infrastructures and deprivations of the locals and oil communities motivate the scourge of kidnapping (Akpan, 2010; Ilechukwu et al, 2015). However, it is not adequate to attribute kidnapping to only the lower classes and unemployed people, based on the truism that such people are encouraged and even sponsored by the wealthy in some societies especially those that engage in kidnapping as a means of revenge.

Godfatherism is also another cause of kidnapping, especially when youths are used and dumped. For example, in Anambra state, unemployed youths were engaged as agents of politicians, armed and violently used to unleash terror on people in 2004 when the crisis between Chief Chris Uba and Dr Chris Ngige escalated due to the politics of godfatherism (Alumona, 2016:367). After this period, kidnapping became one of the most troubling security challenges in the state. The political dimension of this problem has been identified by Inyang and Abraham (2013), with the assertion that the use of

idle youths as political thugs by political elites and dumped after utilising their services in rigging elections, remains a remarkable cause of kidnapping, particularly in many urban areas where the presence of youths are required around polling units. The problem remains that the arms availability at their disposal empowers them in carrying out the act of kidnapping.

Urbanisation is an issue that cannot be disregarded in discussing crime, particularly kidnapping. In his study on environment and crime among residents in urban areas, Dahlback Olof maintains that the subject of how crime emerges in cities is of great criminological significance, based on the fact that crime has shown to be closely related to urbanisation, a situation where the urban enclave is conducive to its inhabitants engaging in criminal activities, especially parts with disadvantageous social conditions (2016:5). According to the scholar, this is also due to the truism that the majority of the populations across the world live in urban centres. The fact that unemployment is a common problem in urban centres makes it one of the most notable causes of kidnapping. This is mainly because some youths and adults travel from rural areas in search of jobs that are not even available in urban areas. Some youths engaging in kidnapping to get their share of the national cake is more of an urban phenomenon particularly in areas with high footprints of oil companies, construction companies and manufacturing industries. Therefore, it can be said that industrialisation attracts kidnapers. The foregoing explains why the menace of kidnapping became so prevalent in most Niger Delta cities like Port Harcourt, Yenagoa, Uyo, Warri, among others because of the rapid growth of oil companies who are seen as not being sensitive to the plight of the oil-bearing communities. Consequently, the search for means of livelihood and well-paid jobs made youths in the region leave their communities for the cities thereby causing unusual rural-urban migration.

The 21st Century has recorded rapid globalisation, sophistication, and organisation of crime, which has become more severe than the one witnessed under a similar rate of crime in the past, particularly now that there is an advance in telecommunications technology which easily offers the offenders the opportunity to reach a greater number of targeted victims (Schneider, 2002:2). To demonstrate that the foregoing assertion is apt concerning the facilitation of kidnapping with information and communication technology, the reported cases of kidnapping show that immediately after taking away

their targets, kidnappers endeavour to establish contact with relatives of victims, using their mobile phones.

Kidnapping is also carried out for spiritual reasons, either for ritual or sacrifice. Between the 1990s and early 2000s, some states in Igboland witnessed an increase in cases of kidnapping for ritual purposes. For example, the Otokoto ritual killing saga in Imo State was an incident that attracted media attention in 1996 (Onyima, 2016). Nwolise (2019) categorises kidnapping and abduction which target rituals as internal security challenges that usually motivate the harvesting of human organs, ritual rape and blood money. Anioma Voice report of 2013 has it that some politicians from the South-south visit the Kapeng cult in Calabar to pay homage and fortify themselves ahead of elections, to guarantee victories in the electoral process or and also sustain themselves in power. This was further buttressed by the Transport Minister, Chibuike Amaechi when he argued during the 34th convocation of the University of Calabar that the political elite is to blame for insecurity in Nigeria (Channels TV, 27 March 2021). Also, in their study, McMains and Mullins (2015) argue that comprehending the differences in their motivations is critical considering the strategies, tactics, and skills required in a specific incident, especially when relatives or agencies establish contact with kidnappers to guarantee the safety of the victims.

Yang et al. (2007) have added the cultural dimension of kidnapping, whereby some communities use it as a cultural practice (e.g. bride capture or kidnapping). This is the type of kidnapping that is often applied loosely to include any bride abducted against the will of her parents. It shows how women are forcefully married without allowing them to choose their husbands particularly in Africa and Asia where even grooms and brides sometimes agree to run away together without payment of bride price to the family concerned (Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014). Whatever the motive or reasons, the fact remains that there is always a factor behind the act of kidnapping people.

It is not disputable that kidnapping for ransom or ritual and other purposes is a violent crime that violates various rights, such as the right to life, right to freedom of movement, right to education, health/family among others. According to Tamuno (1991:96-97) kidnapping for extortion constituted the largest in the field of Sardinia studies in Italy (the Sardinian banditry phenomenon in 1875) related to crimes. Kidnappers usually lock up their victims without any concern for their physical or



hygienic needs, and that is why a Red Cross crisis therapy expert, Rigmor Gillberg suggests the need for victims to analyse their experiences with professional assistance before meeting their families, with the assertion that “therapy given shortly after the event reduces the risk of permanent damage” (Awake, 1999:5). The way most kidnapped victims are treated particularly when as they are locked up in isolated areas or facilities, exposes them to emotional problems even after the incident. The fact that kidnapping causes emotional turmoil and human rights abuse to family members explains why it halts tourism and slows down investment, like in the Philippines where six international companies moved out in early 1997, while kidnap prevention is now taught at schools in Taiwan (Awake, 1999). In most cases, no one would like to visit or tour a geographical location that has poor security records or is marked for high incidents of kidnapping. It shows that the moment people begin to hear about the insecurity associated with this problem, they become scared of visiting such places.

The argument by Adegoke (2014:209) that “the improvement in communication contributed to the rapid increase of kidnap activities” in the country, particularly the availability of mobile communication, is not adequate. It is rather too simplistic in explaining the issues and cannot be said to be a root cause. Mobile phones indeed provide the mechanism through which kidnappers contact relatives and negotiate ransom to be paid before releasing their victims, but it cannot be said to be a cause of kidnapping. It is only when kidnapping has occurred that mobile phones provide the channel of communication as those involved go as far as collecting the phones of the victims to make calls demanding for ransoms and even deprive the victims of the opportunity to make calls unless they want to use them in facilitating the delivery of ransom. They are restricted from making or receiving calls. Family members are compelled to travel long distances, to forests and other isolated places like unimaginable uncompleted buildings.

The effects of kidnapping are noteworthy. As a major socio-economic issue in society, the victims of kidnapping are drawn from different segments of the population, but studies have shown that children and juveniles are victims of kidnappings in many countries (National Crime Research Centre, 2014). Hammer, Finkelhor and Sedlak (2002) indicate that in 1999, there were an estimated 203, 900 child victims of non-family abductions, defined more broadly to include all non-family perpetrators (including friends and acquaintances as well as strangers and crimes involving lesser

amounts of forced movement or detention in addition to the more serious crimes entailed in stereotypical kidnapping (National Crime Research Centre, 2014). The foregoing shows that children are victims of kidnapping which makes them be abused. Shaw (2010:19) posits that “the prevalence of exploitation and abuse of children’s rights explains the anxieties concerning their health, well-being and safety.” In other words, kidnapping greatly exposes children and their parents to anxiety because it takes them away from their homes and particularly to unknown locations where their safety cannot be guaranteed. Protecting children from harm is very difficult in a situation where they are kidnapped.

In their study, Kolo *et al* (2015:130) posit that factors associated with child maltreatment are the sex of the child, economic conditions of parents, occupation and educational qualifications of parents among others which are detrimental to their rights. According to Clube (2015:31), the child is the weakest leg of the tripod of the human nucleus of men, women and offspring. Chhangani and Gidado (1998) argue that children can easily be exploited and denied their rights because they are naïve, vulnerable, and even dependent on adults. A contributory factor is a truism that they can easily trust people, having no evil thought in mind like some adults whose trustworthiness remains questionable as far as ethical tenet is concerned especially as trust and loss of such also explain why and how people are vulnerable to exploitation and human rights abuses (Preble, 2015). This study adds that it is difficult for them to resist.

The kidnapping during the trans-Atlantic slave trade era was characterised by the dehumanisation of victims who were turned into mere objects for exchange, a situation that constituted a “direct assault on their human dignity” (Umukoro, 2010 cited in Ukandu, 2011:55). Consequently, while the plantations in the New World were expanding with an increasing supply of labour from Africa as kidnapped slaves, the majority of homes were in a sorrowful mood when they lost their family members.

In his work on the systemization of violence in kidnapping for ransom, Phillips (2011) investigated 181 kidnapping cases in 32 countries, with the argument that kidnappers direct their attacks on the body or the psyche of the victim in a strategically calculated manner. This is apt because the perpetrators usually adopt such strategies that would further put the victims and their relatives at risk of losing something valuable to them.

The hurt, in the form of psychological or emotional injuries suffered by victims, is one of the effects of kidnapping. According to Ilechukwu, Uchem and Asogwa (2015:28), “victims suffer psychological trauma” because the freedom they desire is denied in the process, thereby violating their dignity; and this shows that kidnapping abuses human rights. The families of victims lose huge sums of money to ensure the timely release of the victims. It takes some time before they recover from the incident. The incidents of kidnapping in the Niger Delta for instance have resulted in severe injuries, both for civilians, and security operatives to the extent that medical records in the government hospitals indicate the level and extent of harm inflicted on the victims of kidnapping (Adegoke, 2014). It should be noted that even if the victims survive unhurt, the experiences remain part of them for a long time.

According to Alumona (2016), as a factor of insecurity, kidnapping undermines human relations, economy and wellbeing of people in the society. This has implications for intergroup relations at the community level. The situation has now placed self-consciousness above community interest or communal living. Alumona (2016:376) buttresses this argument thus:

The norms and values that shape people’s behaviour and orientation within society have been seriously affected. People no longer feel free to interact with others. Friendly disposition to strangers is now a thing of the past ... Philanthropic disposition both at the family and community level has gradually faded out... Most wealthy indigenes no longer return home.

The foregoing assertion is apt. It is believed that being friendly or open to strangers would expose people to the risk of being kidnapped. Most people are now afraid of attending ceremonies like burial, weddings or birthdays, and when they attend, they avoid staying long at the scene of celebration, while being careful when it comes to donation of money. Those planning to wed even go as far as inviting security operatives without minding the cost. In addition, people no longer return home because of fear that within a few hours, they would become targets of kidnappers as seen from reported cases.

Greenawalt (1989) sees kidnapping as coercive criminality that is planned for harming and dispossessing the victims, thereby violating the rights of people to peace or safety. Similarly, the socio-economic impact of kidnapping on life is also due to the manner

that offenders direct their attacks on the psyche of the victim in a strategically calculated manner to extort money from relatives without considering the victims' requirement for proper hygiene and physical wellbeing (Phillips, 2011). This is due to the dimension of where there is the dispossession of belongings including the wife and children of their targets while they are at the same place together (Mejabi, 2012). This dispossession implies that where two or three family members are forcefully taken away to an unknown location, the actors can demand ransom based on the price they fix on each of the victims and must be paid to prevent killing, prolonged torture or even rape of female victims.

A notable argument by Tar and Safana (2021) is that kidnappers mainly use small arms and light weapons which enable them to utilise forests where they set up victimisation camps and occasionally initiate and suspend communication during the negotiation stage. Such a claim is one-sided based on the fact that offenders can decide where and how their criminality is executed, and must not be forests. Some kidnappers do not use arms at all times, and there have been instances where perpetrators even made use of residential buildings as places of captivity, while they directed victims' relatives to drop ransoms at locations away from their hideout to prevent easy tracking. So, anywhere that is not within easy reach or sight of security agencies and suspecting people can be used for their criminality.

One notable danger of kidnapping is the negative impact on foreign direct investment. This is because foreigners who wish to invest are always suspicious about "investing funds in an unstable society because when people are afraid to operate businesses in high-risk areas, the insecurity would worsen the unemployment situation in Nigeria" (Oyemwinmina & Osazuwa, 2016:203). With kidnapping spreading across Nigeria, many Nigerian cities, business owners lost funds and this made some multinationals relocate their head offices to more secure towns from prone areas. Even some countries went as far as identifying high-risk areas in the country and cautioned their nationals to avoid such places for safety reasons. The United States Department of State is an example.

Kidnapping is also responsible for the rapid increase in prices of commodities, particularly in affected areas. This is due to marketers' fear of being kidnapped or hit by a stray bullet when a target is being taken away. According to Wilson (2016:59)

kidnapping, reduced business activities in Rudele, Rivers state where many farmers stopped farming due to fear created by armed pirate-militants who also made it difficult for fishing to take place; and the biggest market at Ahia-Gbo recorded scarcity of fishes. All these are responsible for the sudden inflation of market prices because many traders are no longer supplying commodities, thereby making the demand higher than supply.

The extortion associated with the act of kidnapping is facilitated by kidnappers locking up their victims without any concern for their physical or hygienic needs, and that is why a Red Cross crisis therapy expert, Rigmor Gillberg suggests the need for victims to analyse their experiences with professional assistance before meeting their families, with the assertion that “therapy given shortly after the event reduces the risk of permanent damage” (Awake, 1999:5). The fact that kidnapping causes emotional turmoil and human rights abuse to family members explains why it halts tourism and slows down investment, like in the Philippines where six international companies moved out in early 1997, while kidnap prevention is now taught at schools in Taiwan (Awake, 1999:6).

The alarming threat of kidnapping in Nigeria portrays how different models are now centred on how the predators target would-be victims. For instance, Ani and Nweke (2014), note how religious-oriented model and that which targets top government functionaries, creates a situation where the preys like religious leaders, directors of government boards, university professors, and doctors in government and private hospitals among others, become victims because they can pay huge amount of funds to secure their freedom from captivity. This demonstrates the value of freedom from want and fear. The threat of kidnapping made Adegoke (2014:213) note people’s loss of faith in governments’ capacity to curb the act.” Consequently, the integrity of government as an institution has been downplayed by the problem considering the anarchy caused by kidnapping. It is not a good development for citizens to lose confidence in the government’s capacity and readiness to protect them.

### **2.2.2. The trends of kidnapping**

Over the years, the menace of kidnapping has escalated in different societies with differences in frequency and geographical spread. While some societies have recorded relatively low incidents, kidnapping is high in other places. It is also noteworthy that the geographical spread and prevalence in specific areas is mainly due to the purposes or the goals of the perpetrators. Given that kidnapping is a crime, high crime hot spots in most societies are regarded as zones of human rights abuse (Greene, 1999). It is not disputable that kidnapping for ransom or ritual and other purposes is a violent crime that violates various rights: the right to life, right to freedom of movement, right to education, health/family among others. Because of incidents of kidnapping, Sardinia studies in Italy attracted scholarly attention (Tamuno, 1991).

Turner's (1998) view is that kidnapping terminology originated in 17th Century England when children became victims of kidnapping and sold into slavery or forced to work in farms for colonial authorities. Also, in 1678, the year when the word was first recorded, kidnappers plied their trade to capture people for labour in plantations in colonies around North America (Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014:421). It was problematic to the extent that boys at Aberdeen were publicly and violently kidnapped by American merchants and carried through Bristol port to American plantations where they were sold as slaves to maintain white labour (Noba et Vetera, 1928). Centuries before, in ancient Rome, Emperor Constantine (AD 315) was worried by the occurrence of kidnapping that he made the death penalty the punishment of this criminality. Merchants were also kidnapped by Robber-barons who held them for ransom in Medieval Europe. King Richard I of England was held hostage for years by the Archduke of Austria in the 12th Century. In 1800, in the Sulu archipelago, now part of the Philippines, there was already a standard scale of ransom amounts ranging from 2000 pesos for a European friar to 30-50 Pesos for a male Filipino (Gallagher, 1985; Turner, 1998; Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014).

Child kidnapping in Argentina from 1976-1983 created scenarios where a significant number of children disappeared during the years of state-building threats in the country when victimisation and associated trauma became a daily occurrence (Baita, 2006). In addition, Baita (2006) reveals that with the record of fourteen children born in captivity, nineteen did not grow up to twelve months, and twenty-one of them were between one to five years old, some children were born when their parents were captured and kept in the custody of their captors, while there were negative

experiences such as childhood exposure to violence and associated effects, deafness that is traceable to torture and execution of victims, abuse of pregnant mothers during the period of kidnap, children being angered to commit suicide with their parents' guns, and the post-traumatic disorder arising from being used by offenders to perfect their criminality. In addition, it should be noted that the gun violence effect of forcing children to witness scenes of physical violence could make them prone to fear of death, night, or fear of being restricted to small isolated/dark places (claustrophobia) whenever they hear gunshots around their neighbourhoods. It is even difficult to exclude children from being victims of kidnapping whenever their parents are the targets because whether they are directly affected or not in terms of physical violence, whatever happens to their parents would undermine family sustainability, safety and income.

In her study on how three Igbos were kidnapped in the mid-nineteenth century and later rescued by the English naval squadron and brought to Sierra Leone, Isichei (1976:45) argues that "treacherous friends" can also kidnap people. This is a common occurrence in most societies in the contemporary era, where some reports on incidents of kidnapping link case to the insider factor. It is assumed that an outsider cannot easily have adequate information about targets to aid the planning and execution of the act, like an insider who may be a family member or friend. Out of most of the studies on kidnapping, the one by the National Crime Research Centre (2014:31) seems to have given a more detailed discussion on the kidnapping committed by an acquaintance, family members, domestic employees are paid money to give out keys and/or information of their employers to help kidnappers take the employers' children for payment of ransom. Most of these scenarios can also be described as kidnapping involving neighbours as perpetrators. It is assumed that the kidnapping committed by a relative or friend is more dangerous than those involving others.

As far as kidnapping is concerned, the denial of people's rights to life and freedom of movement is not new in Nigeria as there were "cases of innocent persons including adults and children, who got lost from known abodes under mysterious circumstances between the 1970s and 1980s (Tamuno, 1991:96). This can simply be described as kidnapping. However, a new dimension is the neighbours' perspective to such violation of inalienable rights. In 1984, Alhaji Umaru Dikko was kidnapped from his home in London after being drugged and bundled into a diplomatic crate loaded in

Nigeria bound flight, until he was rescued by officials at the airport (Adegoke, 2014:207). This can be described as international kidnapping planned by the then Nigerian government. The incident showed that England also has a share of kidnapping as recorded in other parts of the world.

A remarkable case of kidnapping was that of Peter Shaw who drew the world's attention in June 2002 when he was kidnapped by a pseudo-military organisation in a busy suburb of Tbilisi, the capital city of Georgia in eastern Europe, where he spent over five months in captivity and subsequently escaped in November 2002, although he endured the harsh physical and mental pressure inflicted upon him by his captors, particularly during 141 days when he was held in horrific conditions, chained by the neck in a tiny cell 3 meters underground, unlit, cold, wet and isolated, and his eventual reunion with his loved ones (Shaw, 2006). The book presents the nature of kidnapping and the risks associated with the experience of such incidents.

The geographical spread of kidnapping shows how the problem affects the people of the Middle East particularly Iraq and their neighbouring nations. In post-war Iraq, children, businessmen, doctors and foreigners numbering up to ten, are kidnapped daily; and payment of ransom does not guarantee the safety of victims, as the kidnappers end up torturing, raping, and assassinating them, especially those involving militant groups (Philips, 2009). This is just one of the cases in most parts of the Middle East where the threat to human security remains a daily experience. The torture that victims experience has remained one of the sources of fear associated with the ugly trend.

In a comparative analysis of kidnapping, trafficking and smuggling, Philips (2009:198) argues that the three criminal acts need an individual who drives, guards, surveillance teams, those that handle funds, as well as provision of security in the house for culprits to record success by advancing through ransom payment stage, although traffickers and smugglers seem to have an upper hand in kidnapping due to availability of existing structure. It can be argued that one of the problems associated with kidnapping is that most perpetrators use structures like uncompleted victims and bushes where people can hardly imagine.

A successful kidnapping team requires proper communication oversight to coordinate every stage of the act. This makes informants very significant actors in the act of



kidnapping because every target needs to be identified and monitored for some time before the operation takes place. This explains why most victims are afraid when it occurs due to the way they are violently taken away from the point of kidnap to the base of kidnappers. Also, the fear is further heightened by the fact that they don't know what fate awaits them in the destination they are being taken to Ezeibe (2012) highlights the imaginative death threat points of kidnapping namely:

1. Time of when victims are targeted, attacked and eventually kidnapped after the planned operation is implemented by offenders,
2. The period when the victims are transported to the hidden location,
3. The incommunicado time when victims are interrogated,
4. That moment when victimised persons establish communication for offenders to negotiate with relatives,
5. Time of collecting ransom-money agreed especially when families of victims go to drop ransom as demanded,
6. The trauma of integration into the society after being set free. This period requires psychological attention to enable those freed to recover from shock and fear of attack and death.

As seen from the aforementioned threat points of kidnappings, it is evident that the goal of the perpetrators is usually aimed at inflicting fear on the victims, establishing a medium of communication with capable relatives, negotiating for ransom, giving information on the location where the ransom must be dropped and the eventual release of their victim. Depending on the nature of the incident, where the negotiations took place would not be the same place where the kidnapped persons are released. As earlier discussed by Ani and Nweke (2014), there is always an aim that motivates the heartless offenders (predators) to use terror tactics to target and oppress the living prey. Being prey leaves the victims of kidnapping at the mercy of their enemies.

From existing literature, terrorism has also contributed to the menace of kidnapping across the globe in recent times. In his study on kidnapping incidents by terrorists, Forest (2012) argues that terrorists now kidnap more people than in previous decades, and identifies how the geographical concentration of kidnapping shifted from Latin America (1970-the 1990s) to South Asia in the 2000s, with Muslim extremist groups taking the lead in this regard. Meanwhile, it should be pointed out that events have

rather overtaken the foregoing assertion as the incidents of kidnapping have also become the order of the day in African states, although also involving terrorist groups and other non-state actors. Notable among the groups are Boko Haram, Al-Shabaab and many others. An apt argument by Forest (2012) is that terrorist groups which are highly selective on the type of people they target, kidnap mainly for political or policy concessions, are less interested in financial gains, except on a few occasions where they demand ransom. It is noteworthy that some extremist groups have kidnapped people especially politicians or their relatives and ended up demanding a prisoner swap to enable their members to regain freedom.

In some Nigerian cities, ritual kidnapping became more rampant from 1999, especially during election periods, in the Southwest and Southeast were reported cases of money-making rituals contributed to the kidnapping of innocent people to acquire spiritual power, or the social menace of child theft (Atoh, 2012:216). The advent of this type of kidnapping showed that people were engaged in the act mainly to get human parts for spiritual purposes rather than demanding ransom from relatives. It meant that the moment a person was declared missing, finding him/her was difficult except the criminals are apprehended before the killing takes place. Most innocent Nigerians have disappeared through this means.

Available literature reveals that from 1990, confrontations with arms and organised crimes proliferated in the Niger Delta and became the order of the day thereby making it more complex for the security sector to implement arms control policies (Davidheiser & Nyiayaana, 2011). The foregoing made the government initiate the Arms-Buy-Back program aimed at retrieving guns from armed and cult gangs to curb kidnapping, although with little success. Taft and Haken (2015) maintain that different groups engaged in kidnapping for ransom but the Eastern MEND in Rivers state was most widely known as mainly a kidnapping franchise, while the Western MEND combined abduction of oil workers with a commitment to the self-determination of the Ijaws. The involvement of the Movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta in the acts of kidnapping worsened the security situation in Niger Delta. It made many residents and tourists live in fear. The bad image of insecurity that characterised the region led to the government's intervention in the area.

According to Isumonah (2013), the kidnapping of expatriate oil workers in the early 2000s became common to the extent that the government responded by establishing a joint task force aimed at containing the problem. It is remarkable that in 2005, six oil workers including two Germans were kidnapped, and then freed three days later. While the kidnapping of oil workers became recurrent in Nigeria Delta, it later became a viable business among many youths in the southeast especially Anambra, Abia and Imo states (Nwagboso, 2012; Johnson, 2016). The spate of kidnapping in many parts of Nigeria is seen as a manifestation of the government to fulfil its constitutional obligations. Alumona (2016:367) notes that the politics of godfatherism contributed to the commission of kidnapping in Anambra state, where police report release by Anambra state Police Command shows that 527 cases of kidnapping were reported between 1999 and 2013.

The foregoing indicates that as of 2009 when Federal Government began the national amnesty programme for repentant Niger Delta militants, the phenomenon was no longer restricted to the South-South of Nigeria with reported cases in Lagos, Abuja, Imo, Bauchi, Benue, Borno, Ebonyi, Kebbi, Kaduna, Kogi, Kwara, Ogun, Ondo, Oyo, Sokoto and Zamfara Kano among other states. According to the former Minister of Police Affairs Ibrahim Yakubu Lame, 353 people were kidnapped in 2008 and only 2 of them died in the process, while 30 died out of the 512 people that were kidnapped in 2010 (Attoh, 2012). Edo like most states has had her share of kidnappings. In September 2011, Omoregie Okpeyen, a musician was kidnapped and killed after N500,000 ransom was collected from his family. On 23 August 2013, 4 policemen were killed by a gang of kidnappers who abducted a renowned human rights activist, Mr Mike Ozekhome. On 29 November 2013, Dr Sunday Eruzegbua was kidnapped and murdered by Archibong Savior, Ofeimu Luke, Okhualeigbe Ehikioya Ekanem Effiong Nyakno, Effiong Udoh Emmanuel and Monday Samson in Benin, Edo State. On 21 December 2013, the abductors of a 43-year-old nurse, Bridget Osawaru killed her after collecting a ransom of N1.5m at Uhunmwonde, near Okhuahie Hill, along Benin-Agbor Express-road (Nigeria Watch, 2016).

The payment of ransom by victims or their families has also been a source of controversy as security operatives sometimes discourage them from negotiating for ransom costs even while they go ahead to negotiate their release without informing security agencies of the processes. Despite the prevalence, most victims' families do

not always report incidents to security agencies. The fear of reprisal and uncertainty over the safety of victims makes it difficult for family members to mention the incident until they are released. The occurrence of kidnapping is an indication that the existence of peaceful coexistence in the affected community is questionable because people cannot easily actualise their human potentials when they live in fear.

Furthermore, the menace of the Boko Haram uprising has denied more than 13,000 people their inalienable rights to life and actualisation of human potentials and also rendered some 1.5 million homeless since the conflict escalated in 2009 (Idahosa, 2015:8; Alasia, 2015). This is due to their combination of kidnapping and other violent attacks like an attack on public places despite the 2013 state of emergency declared to contain the group. Scholars hold the view that the abduction of about 276 Chibok Girls in Borno state in April 2014 simply violated the rights of the children who would have emotional scars when released. The UN Secretary while speaking to state house correspondents on 24 August 2015, after a meeting with President Buhari in Abuja, appealed for an unconditional release of the Chibok Girls. The group is yet to release the girls as desired by many Nigerians and the international community. The kidnapping of the girls from a Government Secondary School in Chibok has been described by Buba (2015:3) as the biggest single incident of kidnapping by Boko Haram insurgents. While the kidnapping by terrorist groups is more deadly and highly sophisticated, that of few individuals seems to be less fatal from existing literature.

It is noteworthy that cult groups and militant groups use kidnapping as money-making ventures to fund their criminal acts in society. On the community perspective of kidnapping especially the one caused by cult groups in Rundele, Rivers state, Wilson (2016:57) notes the rapid increase of kidnapping for ransom from the abduction of two staff of the University Demonstration Secondary School (UDSS), Ndele (Rundele) in May 2015, the criminals kidnapped the principal of Community Secondary School, Rundele with the payment of a ransom in June 2015, about four staff of Rundele High School, Agba-Ndele were abducted on 12th October 2015 in a commando-style in Agba- Ndele during school hours, while four prominent sons and daughters of Rundele were kidnapped at Agba Ndele waterside on 30th April 2016, with one fatality involving Mr Progress Simon Wachuku in the process. The study reveals that there was hardly any operation without being associated with ransom payment, with the reduction of the amount from millions of naira to lower amount by offenders after a

series of negotiations with relatives of victims. The surprising situation in this regard is that kidnapers even target Youth Corps members, labourers among other ordinary citizens. The foregoing instances of kidnapping indicate that the establishment of cult groups and militant gangs can increase the menace of kidnapping in any community or town. It should be noted that the perpetrators of kidnapping usually easily have their way even when they are made to know that the amount demanded is not available because lives are involved in the process.

In his argument that kidnapers are more prepared than their victims, Taylor (2016a:1) outlines the phases of the kidnapping selection and planning process, namely: target selection phase, intelligence-gathering phase, pre-operational planning phase, execution of the operation to kidnap the target individual. The author further identifies the information required for successful kidnapping thus, current residential or business address, family or friends of the targeted individual, departure and arrival times, routes taken, types of vehicle driven or used by the target, marital status, financial information among others. However, it should be added that the execution of the act does not end at the individual level but can also include groups to be kidnapped at the same time. For instance, in the case of the Niger Delta where many expatriates and Nigerian oil workers were kidnapped since 2005, scholars documented that three or more victims were kidnapped at the same time (Aghalino, 2009; Adegoke, 2014). It can be argued that there is hardly any kidnapper that would not be interested in identifying the targets' sources of finance or financial capability, home address or type of profession.

The argument by Taylor (2016) that the target's routes are usually analysed and the best locations for the snatch are identified especially choke points (places where a vehicle must slow down) or isolated areas where the police cannot easily intervene does not always apply in all cases of kidnapping. This is based on the fact that available literature reveals that some people can be kidnapped in their homes or offices even in the daytime. The strategic significance of spatiality to ransom kidnapping cannot be downplayed considering how offenders engage in establishing strongholds across various sites and identity checks to consider targets (Ponce & Andresen, 2020).

On the perpetrators, some scholars have identified different groups as kidnappings namely "strangers, friends and acquaintances, criminal gangs and militia, romantic

partners, family members and relatives” (Likata & Odawa, 2015:52). Additionally, it can be argued that one of the most violent aspects of kidnapping is the one planned and executed by criminal gangs whose use of force or weapons to scare onlookers is not in doubt. In recent times, kidnappings have increasingly been aided by insiders. The kidnapping that is aided by an insider is usually more dangerous than the one organised by outsiders. Insiders can be friends, acquaintances, family members or relatives as the case may be. An instance is when kidnappers tend to use a house help or security man in a compound to kidnap the master.

The activities of relatives or neighbours show how the insider factor increases the risks of kidnapping in society today. There are times when most victims end up indirectly paying ransom to relatives that even know much about their sources of finance. The implication is that they cannot be set free until there is the release of the victims through ransom payment or intervention by the security operatives. The kidnappings that now affect both the rich and the poor is an indication that a society that places too much emphasis on financial accomplishments can indirectly motivate kidnapping particularly when the release of victims is always hinged on ransom payment.

### **2.2.3. The control of kidnapping**

It is expected that every problem or threat to sustainable livelihoods must have a solution or options for eradication within human capacity. Various studies have been conducted by scholars with different suggestions on how to address the problem of kidnapping which hinders victims from enjoying their human rights as desired.

The containment of criminality is a global necessity because of the risk of insecurity associated with crimes and how the spread of such acts could motivate offenders to copy the tactics of their counterparts in other parts of the world. According to the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (2019), when the society effectively contains criminality, it is an opportunity for the values of properties to be increased with adequate opportunity for the growth of investment, jobs, and enhancement of living standards for all to enjoy (cited in Mutegi & Muna, 2021).

Kidnapping has become one of the most threatening crimes in human history to the extent that social order is being downplayed on daily basis due to the involvement of individuals and groups in deviant acts. This necessitates regulation of human

behaviour through constitutional measures and security sector reforms initiatives in form of intelligence-led policing.

Because acts that cause social injury and thwart the right to enjoy a dignified human existence in society are criminal behaviour (Schwendinger & Schwendinger, 1975), kidnapping should be treated as a harmful deviant act to humans considering how a conspiracy of silence over it constitutes a security threat.

On the management of kidnapping, many groups and governments have responded in different ways to nip the crime in the bud. However, the institutional response seems to be more effective than mere advocacy or protests by civil society. Various governments have embarked on reforms by enacting laws to strengthen the criminal justice system as part of the crime control model within and outside Nigeria.

The issue of gun control and regulation of the use of arms has been regarded as a mechanism for preventing violent crimes, which also include kidnapping. This manifests in various constitutional measures aimed at strengthening the criminal justice system. In Nigerian society for example, although government at all levels have strategised on ways of teaming these threats, it should be stated that these initiatives are not new considering how societies in the Middle Ages contained crimes. For instance, with the Statute of Codex in Roman Law, Romans were forbidden from bearing arms without the approval of the emperor, and this explains why a great criminologist in the 17th century, Prospero Farinacci (Pennington, undated) argued that arms bearers are a threat to the society and must be stopped for peace and stability. Contemporary societies are in crises and thus unstable due to the ineffectiveness of arms control laws and the weakness of state sanctions. People easily use guns to threaten and intimidate others.

Akpan (2010) notes that in 1931, in the United States, the upsurge in kidnapping by organised criminals made the Senate and House of Representatives introduce federal legislation on kidnapping.

Schroeder (2006:429) reveals that “ancient societies punished the crime of kidnapping with death while emphasising on the most famous kidnapping in the United States in which the infant son of Charles and Anne Lindbergh was stolen from his crib at the secluded family home, in 1932 in Hopewell, New Jersey.” Consequently, after the

infant was murdered, the accused kidnapper, Bruno Hauptman was executed after four years leading to the enactment of the Federal Kidnapping Act (also known as Lindbergh Law) which makes the act of kidnapping a federal crime when the participants cross state boundaries.

In pre-colonial Igbo society, the social organisations of Oracle and Age-grades kept the society stable thereby enhancing social cohesion to the extent that as the voice of the ancestors, anyone that disobeyed the Oracle faced severe punishment in the form of sickness or death depending on the type of offence (Okoh, 2015:119). Kidnapping is therefore seen as bad conduct that attracts punishment in Igboland (Agbasiere, 2000). As seen from the aforementioned regulatory role, it means that the relationship between the ancestors and Oracles in Igboland contributed to social cohesion by discouraging behaviours that motivate human rights abuses because the tendency for people to violate the rights of others is very high in any society that does not have mechanisms to punish offenders.

It should be recalled that the punishment of kidnappers was aimed at discouraging people from engaging in the ugly trend. Isichei (1976:46) identifies how Igbo communities attempted to curb the practice of kidnapping, when slave traders would be questioned as to how they obtained their slaves, while kidnappers were sometimes sold into slavery themselves, as punishment. The aforementioned control mechanism served as deterrence to offenders whose acts subjected the unsuspecting victims to danger.

In colonial Lagos, where strangers and indigenes committed the crime, the colonial administration prosecuted those accused and identified them as perpetrating the crime of kidnapping especially strangers who committed the crime against children (Osifodunrin, 2013). This is not too different from the recent developments across the country where suspects are charged to court for alleged involvement in the kidnapping.

The Nigerian government also utilised the criminal justice system and constitutional measures to tame the incidents of kidnapping. This was adopted through the 364th section of this country's Criminal Code which advocates for the punishment of kidnapping:



any person that illegally imprisons people, by taking them away by not considering their consent; or prevents persons entitled from having access to them from discovering the places they were imprisoned; is guilty of a felony, and is liable to imprisonment for 10 years (Laws of the Federation of Nigeria 1990).

A significant preventive approach has been suggested by Assiago (2003:441) who believes that the implementation of a local crime reduction strategy that incorporates both short term and long-term preventive measures that discourage causes, consequences and fear of crime can have a positive impact on society. This strategy can be adopted to eradicate the causes and manifestations of kidnapping for ransom across Nigerian cities and communities most of which are facing insecurity caused by a rapid increase in crime. According to Adetayo (2016), the activities of kidnappers around the creeks, made the state Governor, Akinwunmi Ambode to give an order for the immediate demolition of shanties constructed by illegal occupants, who were asked to leave within seven days. This was aimed at addressing the rapid increase of kidnap cases within the state. It is believed that demolishing the shanties would displace criminals who use the area as a hideout to plan and execute their acts against unsuspecting citizens.

The declaration of amnesty has also been recognised as one of the solutions to the menace of kidnapping as adopted by some governments. In some parts of the world, governments have offered to proclaim amnesty to enable armed groups that engage in kidnapping to surrender their arms. Some examples are noteworthy. In Colombia, amnesty was part of the package offered to members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) who turned to kidnappers and drug trafficking to fund their insurgency (Totten, 2016). Also in Kenya, more than 30 Kenya-based members of Al-shabaab accepted a police amnesty to end kidnapping and other forms of attack on civilians. Niger Delta's 2009 amnesty targeted the militants that were also involved in kidnapping for ransom. Similarly, the government of Abia State also attempted to offer amnesty to kidnappers when she declared it to last for two weeks in September in 2010, an opportunity that was dashed when it was cancelled as the kidnapers even went as far as intensifying their efforts to kidnapping more people (Affe, 2010). The latest remains the amnesty declared by the Rivers State government in October 2016 which was embraced by over 2,000 kidnappers who were welcomed by the state amnesty committee at Isiokpo where they surrendered various weapons namely A-

Kalashnikov-47 rifles, G-3 guns, Dane-guns, dynamite, NATO-gun and detonators (The Punch, 2016). The weapons were used to carry out their illicit crime of kidnapping which made the state unsafe. Some of the gang leaders refused to accept the amnesty.

However, the amnesty option may not always work out as planned and expected, and it cannot be an effective antidote to kidnapping for certain reasons. Firstly, the declaration of amnesty does not always address the root causes of kidnapping. It is like addressing a problem from the surface without digging deep to unravel the root causes. Amnesty focuses on the manifestation of the problem without looking at the ways of resolving the prevailing issues responsible for the act. For instance, there are always terms of amnesty programmes, particularly what is expected to be done by all parties during and after the ultimatum period to surrender arms for demobilisation and normal reintegration to take place. According to The Report of the Technical Committee on Niger Delta (2008:55), the Niger Delta problem was attributed to “non-implementation of the recommendations of various reports on the Niger Delta leading to violence, kidnappings, oil theft, illegal bunkering, political uncertainty, economic dislocation, divestment, and inter-and intra-community suspicion and conflicts.” So far, not all the main components have been implemented since the beginning of the national amnesty program. Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011) argue that the amnesty programme did not incorporate a deeper strategy of peacebuilding because the Federal Government of Nigeria presented amnesty as a beneficent gift to ex-militants and therefore takes advantage of the programme to claim the right to territorial control and legitimacy. This makes it crucial that stakeholders prioritise true human-centred development even in the disarmament and reintegration process.

Secondly, not every kidnapper would like to be seen as a repentant criminal owing to the stigma associated with it. It can have a long term stigma on the kidnappers who are told to embrace amnesty. The fear of arrest, victimisation and prosecution can make it difficult for perpetrators to trust the government by coming out to openly renounce kidnapping and disband the gang. Amnesty has remained unrealistic and ineffective due to the associated ultimatum and threats of violence in the form of militarism by the government. Most times, the acceptance of an amnesty window that lasts for weeks or months may not be enough for kidnappers to make decisions on accepting the offer due to lack of trust.

Amnesty will not always work because while some kidnapers may indicate interest in disarming, others may not. For instance, about two months after the amnesty declared by the Rivers State Governor, Mr Nyesom Wike, the media reported that the Inspector General of Police Intelligence Response Team intercepted and arrested a four-man-gang of heavily armed kidnapers in Port Harcourt. A noteworthy question is how can individuals using kidnapping to protest oil-related ecological degradation displacements, income losses, urban/rural poverty and corruption, suddenly accept amnesty and abandon their demands for better welfare packages for their people? This is one of the reasons why amnesty fails particularly when the kidnapers or militants have already gained access to the security market through the purchase of small arms. It even becomes more unrealistic when social amenities like roads, schools, electricity, and health services are not accessible in affected communities.

The life-threatening risks associated with the scourge of kidnapping led to the enactment of anti-kidnapping laws in some states in Nigeria. Some states have responded to kidnapping in the areas of legislation, judicial reforms and also security sector reforms particularly those in Southeast and Southsouth. The law that punishes the act of kidnapping with ten years imprisonment, has been existing in Kano state since 1963, and is expected to be amended through the Kidnapping, Abduction and Forced Labour Amendment Bill that scaled the second reading in October 2016, to provide life imprisonment for kidnapers. Enugu state for instance resolved in September 2016 to take over buildings used by kidnapers with approval to the amendment of Section 315 of the Criminal Code Law, 2004; while Edo and Delta states have signed the anti-kidnapping law which imposes death penalty as punishment for any convicted person found guilty of the act. In Edo state, the Kidnap Prohibition Law was signed by Governor Adams Oshiomhole after amendment by the state House of Assembly in 2013. The law also prescribes the demolition of any premises used by kidnapers. The kidnapping prohibition law is a radical departure from Nigeria's Criminal Code Act, CAP C38, LFN 2004, which prescribes ten years imprisonment for any person found guilty of kidnapping. However, the law was amended in Delta state, in June 2016 to replace the death penalty with life imprisonment. Other states like Abia and Anambra have also embarked on a clampdown on kidnapers by demolishing any building used as a hideout. Furthermore, the ongoing process of

enacting a law prescribing capital punishment for kidnappers at the National Assembly is aimed at discouraging kidnapping.

However, there are controversies over the issue of the death penalty for kidnappers. It has been argued that apart from the fact that there is no evidence that the death penalty deters crime more effectively than other punishments, the death penalty as already enacted in some parts of Nigeria is a violation of the right to life as contained in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights given that it is cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment (Popoola, 2016). The reason is that kidnapping is not a crime that involves intentional killing. It remains to be seen how a kidnapper who ends up killing his victim through torture while negotiating for ransom would be exonerated from the crime of intentional killing.

Recently, Nigeria's Senate requested state governments to enact laws that would prosecute kidnappers and other crime-related offences in their jurisdiction and recommended that the Inspector General of Police and Director-General of the Department of State Security Services, and other security agencies also do the same. The Senate also suggested that one of the best ways to discourage and control kidnapping is for people to delay negotiating for ransom payment by enduring the inconvenience while the search for victims by the security operatives lasts (Umoru & Erunke, 2015). The foregoing means that perpetrators continue to kidnap people because they are convinced that one successful act would lead to another. Also, Kano is one of the few states that have been able to implement the recent directive by the Senate through its House of Assembly, bypassing into law the bill seeking life imprisonment for kidnappers in the state. The law is contained in the Kidnapping, Abduction and Forced Labour Amendment Bill 2016. This has already been achieved by the Ogun state government which signed the bill stipulating 25 years jail term for convicted kidnappers into law in November 2016. The stated tough penalty is due to the violence associated with the act of kidnapping.

Community policing, peace and security meetings, and intelligence gathering are strategies to curb crime (Mutegi & Muna, 2021), and this is because community policing is believed to have a positive impact on public safety, reducing fears of incidents, due to its proactive nature. Considering the significance of intelligence-led policing in crime containment (Idoko, 2021), police rescue has also been a strategy in

curbing kidnapping. When joint security operations are planned, some kidnappings create a scenario where humans are taken away as commodities to be exchanged for money as ransom payment before being released. The reactive response to the menace of kidnapping as adopted by many governments has entailed the tracking and identification of locations where victims are held while negotiations for ransoms last, as well as launching of rescue operations aimed at reuniting victims with their families (Pires et al, 2014:3). Unfortunately, this strategy is very costly due to life-threatening implications, as some victims can be mistakenly killed during a rescue operation. Even unlucky security operatives can also be gunned down by kidnappers if proper strategy is not adopted. For example, Chinwo (2016) reveals that in July 2016, there was an exchange of gunfire between kidnappers and the policemen in Ubima, Rivers state which led to the death of four policemen and two kidnappers while the victims were rescued. A similar incident also happened in Oshimili North area of Delta in 2013 when kidnappers killed a chief before the police were able to track the location where he was held (Taft & Haken, 2015). Additionally, the best way to also scare kidnappers is to make them understand that they are not even safe with the use of mobile phones to call victims' relatives. This can be achieved through the involvement of network service providers by helping security agencies to track and arrest the suspects.

A notable challenge to police rescue and the intervention of Nigeria's criminal justice system in responding to the menace of kidnapping is obvious considering the difficulty usually associated with the witnesses of crime to willingly cooperate with the law enforcement agencies who require the relevant information offered by eyewitnesses to stop criminal gangs (Ojedokun, 2019). This challenge can be overcome through continuous engagement with communities by the police and other security providers.

Community policing has become a necessity in the contemporary world. The incidents of violence targeted at people who are conversant with the terrain of interest and have adequate knowledge of their targets seem to have fuelled crimes in recent times, mainly due to the trends of social disorganisation (Lancaster & Kamman, 2016). This is problematic considering the inability of various stakeholders to instil discipline in the youth and other categories of people, and possibly hold them accountable for any deviant act that may be inimical to the human security and tranquillity of their community.

Community policing is necessary because while people go for their legitimate businesses, some groups of people may take advantage of security lapses or the calmness of a place to perpetrate crime. For instance, Lancaster and Kamman (2016:33) argue that because people work at different locations and return home at night, “several criminal acts have the probability of occurring near homes than some.” Notably, peri-urban crimes can reduce when security agencies step up patrols along with transit areas on highways linking various cities because of the proximity of these places to urban areas (Mutegi & Muna, 2021).

So far, the arrest of kidnappers and their confessional statements for possible prosecution also contributed to the eradication of the crime because some of the culprits arrested were able to name other members of their gang. According to a police report released on 11 October 2016, the Nigeria police discourages the payment of ransom, while asserting readiness to continue limiting the capacity of kidnappers and other criminals to disrupt the quality of life of Nigerians by the deployment of adequate manpower and resources in crime reduction, detection and effective prosecution of offenders in courts of competent jurisdiction. It is noteworthy that the report also assures the general public that the containment of kidnapping acts in society is achievable with the collaborative efforts of stakeholders in the form of collective ownership of law enforcement (Nigeria Police Force Report, Press Release 2016). However, it should be noted that the aforementioned collective ownership of law enforcement should not be misinterpreted for jungle justice as suspected kidnappers have to be reported to the law enforcement agencies for arrest and prosecution.

It has been established that spaces of abduction are usually different from sites of captivity and locations of release after ransoms are paid (Ponce & Andresen, 2020). And these are the areas where law enforcement agencies and concerned citizens are supposed to focus their attention on any intervention that would lead to crime containment. In 2017, the menace of kidnapping made Governor Akinwumi Ambode approve the procurement of surveillance aircraft and gunboats to tackle incessant kidnapping in Lagos State (PM News, August 3, 2017). This was caused by the series of kidnappings especially that of Igbonla Model College where six students were kidnapped.

Reducing kidnapping also requires the active involvement of police officers in public security education to create awareness of the modus operandi of offenders whose hideouts are not always invisible (Nwadike-Fasugba, 2020). The Internet of Things devices can be deployed in this regard to facilitate the tracking down of perpetrators. It is noteworthy that the effectiveness of law enforcement determines the success or failure of planned kidnapping by offenders as well as the duration of being held captive before victims gain their freedom (Ponce & Andresen, 2020) because captives can only be set free when security agencies can mount pressure on offenders and demand for the immediate and unconditional release of those held in hideouts or face confrontation. The use of security operatives in the eradication of kidnapping may have succeeded in sending a warning to perpetrators but scholars argue that “the crusade against kidnapping in the country cannot only be tackled by government’s law enforcement agents but also through job creation” as the availability of jobs in different sectors will enable able-bodied youths who are qualified and willing to work (Oyemwinmina & Osazuwa, 2016:210). This is in line with the statement by immediate past Governor of Edo State, Adams Oshiomhole, that the generation of jobs for the unemployed youths remains the only remedy for the rate of kidnapping because when youths are busy in their places of work, they will not have the energy to engage in crime at night (Enobakhare, 2010). So far, the creation of jobs by the government for the teeming population in Nigeria has not been challenging as businesses and government institutions are enmeshed in economic recession and budget deficit, thereby making the desired creation of jobs and diversification of the economy almost unachievable as desired. It is noteworthy that kidnapping, which leads to the violation of human rights, downplays one of the attributes of humans, that they must be alive, and this makes them live a life of misery or fear. Such negative development explains why Ahmed and Seshu (2012:150) developed a groundbreaking human rights fact-finding methodology used within the human rights community for documentation and advocacy, in partnership with communities affected by the human rights violations being investigated.

#### **2.2.4 Case studies on human rights violations and protection**

The protection of human rights concerns people in every society. According to Appadorai (1961) society is an association of human beings and suggests the whole

complex of the relations of man to his fellow (Ogunmodede, 1985). All human rights are interrelated and complement one another irrespective of whether they are at the same pedestal (Ogunfolu & Fagbemi, 2015). Being a controversial concept (Ishay, 2004), “right” discourse has attracted the attention of scholars and international non-governmental organisations. On his part, Jones (2015:462) reveals that human rights in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Human Rights Declaration of 2012, “is a highly contentious issue representing an interesting puzzle given the disparate nature and standing of its member states in terms of political systems and, economic development.” Such controversy in the conception of human rights should not diminish its importance (Oyadare, 1995). As an institution, the notion of human rights could be regarded as one that is as old as mankind, considering how mankind was formed in the ‘image of God’ thereby giving humans the prominence and power over other living things in the world (Obasaola, 2014). Held (1996) is of the view that four centuries before the beginning of this millennium, Plato indicted the city-state of Athens for handing over power to the people who did no training to run their lives; while as from the 5th Century BC, Athenian democracy gave citizens equal rights to participate in decision making and to hold public office based on the ideal of equality among citizens (Jahangir & Shafi, 2013).

It is believed that the conceptual and philosophical basis of human rights has its roots in the specific circumstances of Western society, although some scholars argue that the philosophical aspect, especially the notion of human dignity also existed in other cultures (Henkin, 1989; Ishay, 2004). In addition, it is often said that “in the contemporary world, human rights claims are justified rhetorically as required by human dignity, goals of freedom, justice, and peace” (Henkin, 1989:11) However, existing literature suggests that every society that desires stability must recognise the rights of people, both minorities and majority groups. Moreover, Gyekye (1996) maintains that the pre-colonial African society had human rights rooted in African traditional values, thereby offering more insight into why Africans believes in human dignity which is an expression of the natural and moral rights of the individual (cited in Elechi, 2004:8). Vincent (1986) notes that the idea that the right of collectivities like ‘peoples’ should enjoy at least equal dignity with those of individuals, is held to be characteristic of African approaches to human rights (cited in Haynes, 1991:412). Hassan (2015) argues that traditional religion, which upholds traditional values, was a



centrifugal force around which all life and kingship gravitated. Raz (2010) writes that human rights function in the international arena to underline the worth of all human life. Eleftheriadis (2010) for instance, in response to Joseph Raz's '*Human Rights in the Emerging World Order*' where human rights are presented as summaries of value and continuous with interpersonal rights, brings to our understanding that the best philosophical account of human rights is situated in the institutional domain of international relations. This is apparently due to the universal explanation of rights in the international political system.

The current transnational activism shows that the issue of human rights protection is a serious business in modern societies as the obligation in the international community due to the impacts on life expectancy and human security (Aghemelo, 2014; Albert, 2003; Aluko, 2015; Bader & Daxecker, 2015; Udogu, 2013). There is a close relationship between the issue of human rights protection and human development (Frostell, 2002; UNDP's Human Development Report, 2000). The foregoing is apt given that people's best can only manifest when they have the freedom to actualise their human potentials.

Scholars also agree that any delay or failure in protecting fundamental rights is a 'risk' to human existence/safety (Shaw, 2010; McAdam, 2015). The foregoing indicates that monitoring is crucial to enable stakeholders to pay attention to critical indicators that point to human rights abuse. It has also been established that there are "multiple influences that impact on human rights and health, including the promotion and protection of human rights towards human flourishing" (Mitchell, 2015; Lutchman, 2015). The existence of an international human rights regime is due to the significance of protecting people from abuse (Oomen, 2015). For instance, through the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), the African Charter of Human and People's Rights internationalised the issue of human rights when it established the African Commission of Human and Peoples Rights in 1981 (Oparaoha, 2005). This serves as a continental instrument of human rights protection in Africa.

In the contemporary international political system, the attention given to the right issue generates different controversies across the globe (Groves, 2015). This focus is apparently due to the incremental wave of aggression, crime rates and associated threats to the safety of humans and threats to national security. Thus, in a bid to protect

human rights, Super Powers sometimes impose economic or military sanctions on groups or states that are found culpable (Hafner-Burton, 2014); even though unilateral sanctions seem to be more effective than multilateral sanctions which are usually accompanied by the devastating impact on human rights in states (Peksen, 2009). Although humanitarian intervention is seen as the legitimation of violence, just like the German case 1937–9 (Dülffer, 2016; Klose, 2016), as well as humanitarian intervention through the enforcement of Jewish rights in Romania and Morocco around 1880 (Green, 2016), the emerging tradition is that of the responsibility to protect (the rights to intervene or the obligation to intervene), as part of international community's attempt to encourage states to accept their obligation of protecting human life and rights by their right to sovereignty as a principle of international law aimed at protecting people from acts of violation by applying the emerging norm (Bose, 2015; Fröhlich, 2016). This can be described as the enforcement of humanity considering the human rights component (Geyer, 2016). However, it remains to be seen whether some states are living up to expectations in this regard. Macdonald (2016) has also documented the moral hazards of humanitarian intervention. According to Mendez, a scholar at the Sur-Human Rights University Network, the enormous quantitative dimension of human rights manifests in the continuous rise in violations of individuals' rights by states (2004). It is due to the clampdown on opposing forces and those perceived as enemies of the states. This development reveals that states have a responsibility to ensure the rights of citizens are protected through all constitutional means because the task of promoting inalienable rights would be more challenging when states that are signatories to various international instruments condone the channels through which such the rights of people are disregarded.

The position of Umozurike (2005) is that the recognition of the international status of human rights in their political, economic, social and cultural manifestations opens up new vistas for international cooperation. Such international cooperation manifests in the human rights work championed by the United Nations across the globe to the extent that most African countries have demonstrated their acceptance of the human rights treaties (Heyns & Killander, 2006). The foregoing explains why human rights protection is part of the US foreign policy agenda. Apart from being a central issue in the foreign policy of the United States (Bader & Daxecker, 2015; Oyadare, 1995),

human rights are absolute and qualified under the UK Human Rights Act of 1998 which also gives defendants the right to a fair trial in Article 6, while also prohibiting torture and discrimination of such people in Articles 3 and 14 respectively (Patel & Tyrer, 2011). Additionally, during this period, then-Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor stressed the crucial nature of a 'human rights culture in the UK, to "reconnect ordinary citizens with politics and law, improve public services, reintroduce respect for basic human dignity and also promote uniting values in the nation" (Stenner, 2011:1215). The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (1972) guarantees a cluster of fundamental rights (Article-27-44), equality before the law and equal protection of the law (Art.27). Freedom from discrimination (Art.28), life and personal liberty (Art.32), legal rights (Art. 31, 33,35), fundamental freedoms including freedom of movement, assembly, association and thought (Art. 36-39), employment rights (Art. 29,40) and minority religious rights (Art.41) (Farhana & Easin, 2015). The right to justice is regarded as a very important and valuable right that the Sharia has given to every person as a human being, discourages discrimination and recognises absolute equality between persons from all walks of life (Oraegbunam, 2012). Furthermore, the significance of fundamental rights made the United States and its allies in Afghanistan and Iraq develop battle-tested tactics, techniques, procedures (TTP), and theatre-specific commanders' guidance that reduced/limited civilian harm (Muhammedally, 2015).

These demonstrate that the establishment of human rights culture can sustain the value for human dignity within a state and it remains a channel towards making the tasks of rights protection an important obligation.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights protects religious movements from abuse (Egbewole & Etudaiye, 2008). For decades, protection of rights remains a focus of doctrines of Papacy in Rome for the prevention of violence and promotion of positive peace. Ishay (2004) reveals that as Europe was plagued by religious wars pitting Catholics and Protestants in a struggle to redefine religious and political structures, human rights visionaries like Hugo Grotius, Samuel Pufendorf, Emmerich de Vattel, and René Descartes constructed a new secular language, affirming common humanity that transcended religious sectarianism. It goes a long way to offer more insight into the recognition of humane attitudes within the platform of religious movements/beliefs.

The relevance of human rights explains why the elements or principles are incorporated either expressly or impliedly (as a logically necessary consequence) in teachings of most religions of the world including Buddhism which is said to ascribe to universal human rights concept while there is obvious nexus/harmony between Buddhist norm of Dhamma and human rights (Bagde, 2014:32). This is apt considering how the Christian faithful in South East preach ‘*egbula mmadu*’ ‘*ezula ohi*’ (thou shall not kill or steal) to protect lives and discourage homicide. The foregoing corroborates Okafor’s (1992) assertion that the Igbo society abhors stealing and condemns any interference with the right to property because it is a grave offence. The foregoing is also a characteristic of traditional values that discourage impunity. According to Obasola (2014:31), *mmadu*, which is an indigenous Igbo word for humans translates to mean “life beauty”, apparently sums and provides insight into the copious tradition of the African view of unique human nature and existence. Of course, God is the creator and giver of life and must not be wasted by man.

The foregoing pointedly reminds scholars what religion is all about in the words of Olarinde (2011:2) who posits that “religion is a set of beliefs in the supreme God (monotheism as believed in Christianity and Islam) or gods (polytheism as believed by the African traditional worshippers) and mode of worship of the same”. Thus, the God involved in religion is a promoter of peace, morals and wants his adherents to eschew all conditions that promote strife, human rights abuses which are driven by hatred, injustice, inequality of opportunities in society, discrimination, exploitation, attacks on and marginalisation of minority groups as well as the perception of the other that usually characterises ethnocentrism.

In the Islamic religion, El-Seoudi (2012) states that “Allah the Almighty decreed according to His will and wisdom, to create man as a unique creature distinguished with the ability of choice; as Islam guarantees the freedom of belief/worship, social solidarity, justice among others to non-Muslims (Yake, 2015). Islamic countries are expected to protect such rights to enable non-Muslims to live without being oppressed by the adherents of Islam. The *Hisba* Law of 2003 established in Kano State following the *Sharia* law, prohibits anti-Islamic behaviours like alcoholic consumption, pornography, drug abuse, gambling and prostitution which aided the upsurge of crime in the Kano metropolis (Olaniyi, 2005). Given that the aforementioned anti-social behaviours motivate crime and associated violence, the probability of aiding the

violation of human rights is not in doubt. Therefore the emergence of *Hisba* Law is timely and would encourage life-saving acts in society.

In Nigeria for instance, there is hardly any work on human rights violations that do not discuss extensively the government's proclivity for flagrant abuse of inalienable rights. For instance, Ifowodo (1993) itemised in detail the framework repression in the context of human rights violations by most military regimes, thus: suppression of freedom of speech and expression, proscription of Newswatch, violation of political rights, disregard of popular choices, proscription of political associations and Nigerian Labour Congress, arbitrary arrests assault on individual unions, suppression by decrees, repression of the Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU), denial of the right to health, illegal detention, torture in cells, extra-judicial killings, among others. Ndubisi (1991) averred that General Buhari, (like Ibrahim Babangida) outlined his objectives with emphasis on human rights when he came into power and opened the gates of the prison by abrogating the notorious Decree Number 4 which made it possible for hundreds of people to gain freedom automatically. The foregoing reveals that actions or inactions can protect inalienable rights or undermine them.

The machinery for the enforcement of human rights is critical to the promotion of such rights, particularly the categories of human rights namely, civil and political rights; economic, social and cultural rights; group and solidarity rights; the right to development; and the right to peace. It is noteworthy that economic, social and cultural rights are critical to the protection of people from danger such as kidnapping. Chiroma (1998) identifies the machinery for enforcement of human rights with emphasis on the processes, at the national, regional and international levels which are usually backed by international norms including the constitutional provisions, the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. As critical as it is, the rights of people to determine their destiny made human rights activist, Ken Saro Wiwa and other members of MOSOP attend the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights and the Geneva meetings of the Committee on Racial Discrimination in 1993 where they presented the plight of the Ogoni people to the international human rights groups (Olayode, 2012). Similarly, the relevance made various countries including Brazil and South Africa to legitimise women's rights agendas through constitutional and legislative reforms (Razavi, 2007; Dancer, 2015). No wonder why Karwai (2010)

maintains that Islam is the only religion that rescues women from all forms of injustices and honours them as human beings, a feminine beings, a daughter, a wife and a mother.

Also, the apartheid regimes in South Africa perpetrated various crimes against the majority who were discriminated against by minority whites (Ajala, 1986; Mandela, 1994). Apartheid Colonialism', is a form of settler colonialism, and imperialism under specific circumstances that led to crimes against humanity (Theodoropoulos, 1984). From 1948, White-controlled South Africa reinforced and extended white power through new statutes governing elaborate systems of social, economic, and political privilege and discrimination that criminalised the black body (Encyclopedia Americana, 2003; Agozino, 2021; Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021). Remarkably, harsher and more repressive state powers were established to force Africans into acquiescence in the 1950s; to the extent that throughout the 1960s, the government had steadily increased the police powers of the state in response to African challenges/confrontations at Sharpeville (Clark & Worger, 2004; Dastile & Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2021). By implication, the fundamental rights of freedom of movement, political expression, protection from search without a warrant, and immunity from detention without hearing or trial were severely circumscribed (Africa Today, 1996; Encyclopedia Americana, 2003). For example, the police issued a warrant for the arrest of Nelson Mandela who was seen as an outlaw, and instituted roadblocks across the country while he was being pursued (Mandela, 1994).

The perpetrators of human rights abuses were police, members of the South African Defence Force, mercenaries, 'hit men' and other surrogate forces who employed methods like torture, rape, car, parcel and letter bombs, poison, abductions and assassinations (Grasbosky & Stohl, 2010). The violation of inalienable rights was further institutionalised through the establishment of the Bureau for State Security (BOSS) by the government in 1969, as well as the State Security Council (SSC) in 1972 for advisory purposes, aimed at coordinating the security activities of the security branch of the police and the military intelligence division of the Defence Force, which culminating in the violent unrest /resistance that led to the death of Stephen Biko in police custody in 1977, as well as government's involvement in over 30-40 assassinations including the use of letter bomb between 1979 and 1983 (Clark, & Worger, 2004:78; Grasbosky & Stohl, 2010). The death of Biko was just one of many

deaths as many ANC sympathisers were taken into custody in South Africa, only to die by suicide or by accident (Grasbosky & Stohl, 2010; Agozino, 2021). Unfortunately, those that had the opportunity of being arraigned frequently encountered prejudice in the court as White witnesses often declined to answer questions from the black attorney (Mandela, 1994; Agozino, 2021). The mirror effect of human rights abuses during this period made Iyav (2014) argue that the apartheid era “left a spell which is dissipating gradually but will take up to two more generations in next two centuries for the hangover smoke of apartheid to disappear.” Given that apartheid was a major source of deprivation, the statement is apt considering the negative impact on intergroup relations, creating social stratification within the South African society.

In Somalia which is referred to as a failing state, militant Islamism that originated from popular support in 2005 and growing international support that created a platform for terrorist activities contributed to the menace of human rights abuses which rather made life nasty (Hoehne, 2009; Lee, 2011; United States Department of State, 2010; Okoye & Tsado, 2021). The human rights record in Somalia is very poor. It shows how the country descended to a failing state considering the rate of fatalities daily occasioned by insurgent violence caused by the activities of the Al-Shabaab group that kidnaps people and engages the security forces in combat. The group has been implicated in various kidnappings, killings and suicide bombings in the area. It is notorious for targeting public places, government offices, residential areas, hotels and other tourist attractions and justifies such killings by publicly claiming responsibility for actions. Lee (2011) avers that since the listing of al-Shabaab as a terrorist organisation in March 2008 by the United States, the group has been launching an offensive against some neighbouring countries especially Kenya since the last four years and has intensified attacks within Somalia since 2009. It remains the only designated foreign terrorist organisation in East Africa that targets the Somali government officials and US-supported African Union troops (Reeve & Pelter, 2014).

The situation in Somalia has degenerated into reprisal among the military rather than confrontation of the enemy, the Al-Shabaab by targeting without adequate intelligence, civilian dominated areas (Hoehne, 2009; Hills, 2014). For instance, a report revealed that after a bomb attack on the convoy of African Union forces in Somalia (AMISOM), Ugandan army troops of six men involved in the counterinsurgency went after the suspects around several houses in Mera’s Rusiya neighbourhood and

separated the men from the women at a wedding venue (Moalim Iidey family) and shot the six adult men, including four brothers, an uncle and their father who later died in the night after the soldiers denied him the opportunity for medical treatment (Premium Times, August 14, 2015). The situation has since attracted the attention of Human Rights Watch which demanded immediate prosecution of the soldiers.

The fact that the military is not predisposed to constitutional rule in Nigeria's dark era of military rule made them enact anti-press laws and arrests without trial which all undermined the rights to freedom of speech and freedom of movement, including Buhari/Idiagbon's decree 4 and Abacha's decree 22 which all curtailed fundamental human rights (Ogbu, 1998). In addition, Babangida's decree no. 25 of 1987 banned a particular category of people from being involved in partisan politics and empowered the National Electoral Commission (NEC) to disqualify many people including Balarabe Musa who was prevented from mobilising support for his association with the Peoples' Liberation Party (PLP) in the registration bid, when he was detained by Babangida's regime (Momoh, 1995). The freedom of political association was not in sight during this period. According to Ojebode and Adegbola (2010), Nigeria's human rights record was among the poorest in the world in the days when General Ibrahim Babangida and late General Sani Abacha ruled the nation. Also, Aluko (2015) reveals that during this period, the ethnic militia that emerged from the June 12, 1993 controversy worsened the already challenging security situation especially when the security agencies adopted extra-judicial methods as an operational principle in containing threats from non-state armed groups with attendant human rights violation. It should be added that this period also witnessed the competition for the control of the security market between the security operatives and militia groups across the country.

The massive upsurge in the incidents of extrajudicial killings, deprivation of liberty, torture, denial of free access to the courts, abuse of due process, restrictions on free movement, privacy, free press and freedom of association and assembly, made the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP) in a report on human rights practices in Nigeria from 1995 to 1996 to describe Abacha's regime as the worst military administration (Suleiman, 2010:111). Apart from possessing an obsessive allergy to free speech, Abacha's regime was characterised by summary execution of dissenters, mysterious disappearance of pressmen and ladies among others, to the extent that the credibility of



the National Human Rights Commission under successive military regimes was questionable (Ojebode & Adegbola (2010).

The assertion by Amuwo, Bach and Lebeau (2013:1) also corroborates the foregoing statements, thus:

The four and a half years of the Sani Abacha regime stand out as a watershed in the history of independent Nigeria. Within six months of Abacha's regime which began on 17 November 1993 rule, the Nigerian dictator endorsed Ibrahim Babangida's annulment of MKO Abiola's presidential election, before launching another transition programme which unravelled into a self-succession bid. The Abacha dispensation was characterised by the unleashing of violence and terror on private citizens, resulting in a general feeling of insecurity among the citizenry, combined with deinstitutionalization – through the manipulation, distortion and destruction of whatever autonomy remained in the legal and judiciary institutions.

To demonstrate how Babangida and Abacha's regimes were authoritarian, with 'shoot at sight' orders given to soldiers and the police which was highly militarised working as an 'invasion force' practising 'garrison culture', (Roberts, 2003:144-147), the police raided and killed some indigenes of Ogoni after the Andonis were set against them in the resource-based struggle in Rivers State (Momoh, 1995:336). Some of the abuses were subjected to the public hearing by the Human Rights Violations Investigation Commission (HRVIC) set up by the Obasanjo administration. According to Adams (2012), the mandate of HRVIC focused on the gross human rights abuses of the past as it received the approval of the executive council and sat for 25 times within 3 years, after receiving over 10, 000 applications.

Nigeria also presents another relevant case study, from the Niger Delta to the Northeast where the multinational joint task force is presently battling to contain the Boko Haram insurgency. In the country, insurgents are notorious for engaging in arms proliferation, driving vehicles laden with explosives into buildings, crowded places, schools and launching attacks on security forces, hereby making terrorism one of the main causes of insecurity in the country with attendant instability (Oche, 2013). The human rights violations manifest in fatalities, internal displacements, food insecurity, and forceful conversion into another religion among others. Consequently, military

operations are characterised by retaliations by troops and their commanders (Okoye & Tsado, 2021).

The menace of the Boko Haram uprising has denied more than 13,000 people their seemingly inalienable rights to life and actualisation of human potentials and also rendered some 1.5 million homeless since the conflict escalated in 2009 (Alasia, 2015). It is one of the cases of interreligious tensions as seen in countries like Egypt, Kenya, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, and the Central African Republic (Bunte & Vinson, 2016). Since that time, more people have been displaced despite the military operation and the 2013 state of emergency aimed at containing the group. According to Alasia (2015:44-45) research reveals that “extremism exists because of cultures that both intentionally and unintentionally promote violence; such as the incessant devastating attacks on numerous educational institutions in northern Nigeria, thereby contradicting the socio-economic perspective on the conflict.”

The aforementioned claims are closely related to the assertion that religious violence led to the death of thousands of Nigerians due to structural explanation that economic grievances eventually lead to violence as well as the rational choice exposition which offers insight into elite conspiracy especially how elites instrumentally use religious narratives for mobilisation purposes (Bunte & Vinson, 2016). Such conspiracy and economic inequalities further create opportunities for the violation of human rights.

A crucial case study in Nigeria’s oil sector which Albert (2011) describes as the most volatile sector of the economy. This is due to youth restiveness with attendant confrontations between the oil companies that are backed by the government, and the host communities, a situation that is one of the main sources of human rights abuses. In many occasions, the freedom of movement and association have been restricted while many have been killed in the process of what the people see as their right to self-determination (Ezeilo, 2007; Ezirim, 2011; Tamuno & Udom, 2012; Aghalino 2009:156; Afeno, 2014; Faleti 2010). This contributed to the execution of Ogoni spokesman and human rights activist, Ken Saro Wiwa in 1995 by the regime of General Sani Abacha. In a related development, oil production and distribution by the multinational oil companies also contribute to the cases of abuse of socio-economic and cultural rights with attendant revolts due to their unrestrained access to land and pollution of much cherished traditional lands (Aghalino, 2011).

As a practice that aggravates the problem of large-scale land acquisition, it is instructive that land grabbing usually caused by multinational companies and government as recorded in Africa rather excludes the host communities from the development process with attendant loss of access to land for food production (Ingwe et al, 2010). Land grabbing has been responsible for the forceful eviction of peasants from their ancestral lands, a situation that deprives Niger Deltans of livelihoods pushes them into cities and human settlements away from their original places of abode (Ingwe et al, 2012:77-78). According to Engström (2002), major violations of human rights resulting from multinational companies' operations are revealed to the society by efforts of private organisations, civil society and inter-agency actors. Babatunde (2010) reveals that the uninhabitable nature of some communities like the Ilaje-Ugbo in Ondo State manifests in the effective effort by the Federal Government and the multinational oil companies to control the oil-related environmental instability. The aforementioned issues contradict the mission statements of the oil companies. For instance, despite adopting a human rights policy in 2009 to enhance Chevron's capabilities to manage human rights issues wherever it operates, most communities still lament the negative effects of corporate practices in the areas they operate. Chevron writes that:

In many communities where Chevron operates, social issues are part of a broader set of complex socioeconomic and security concerns. Chevron recognizes that, while governments have the primary duty to protect human rights, companies have a responsibility to respect human rights and an opportunity to play a positive role in their communities (Chevron Nigeria Limited, 2009:5). Initiation of four human rights areas relevant to the company's operations, such as employees, security providers, community engagement and suppliers, has not addressed the human rights concerns of the people, thereby raising a question of values on the company's ethical manner and the conduct of business in a socially responsible way. In addition, this development points to an inadequate commitment to human rights by the company which has the values of integrity, trust, diversity, ingenuity, partnership, protection of people and the environment. It remains to be seen whether the oil spillages recorded by the company and the ecological damages in communities is in line with the values of human rights commitment and environmental protection.

The issue of human rights has become synonymous with the petroleum industry in Nigeria due to adverse social implications of the presence of oil-producing companies which has greatly contributed to the restriction of people's movement in producing communities to protect companies' oil installations, particularly the pipelines, flow stations and oil wells (Udeke, 1995). Consequently, the right to freedom of movement and access to their land has been withdrawn without any regard for the custom of the people and further aggravated by the government's unwavering support and partnership with the companies as joint venture partners. The foregoing has created a situation in which Udeke (1995) argues that the law-abiding members of oil-producing communities frown at the restriction of their rights and the presence of security operatives which portrays the enclave as garrison towns. There have been some scenarios where security forces clash with militants and restive youths, but the brutality of the military remains a major problem just like the May 2009 bombardment of seven communities suspected of harbouring militant camps in Delta State which led to the death of over 500 people (Afeni, 2014). In this regard, the action denied those victims their rights to life and safety.

Arguably, such conflicts are driven by the disregard for transparency and human rights especially in the process of resource extraction with debilitating human rights implications particularly for a state that exports oil to the USA which has made resource curse take hold before human rights became part of the US foreign policy objective, based on long term trends (Bader & Daxecker, 2015). Due to the foregoing, sabotage against the interest of multinational oil companies and government have become the order of the day. The activities of pipeline vandals and illegal oil bunkering across Nigeria explain why oil distribution is a more deadly operation than oil production based on the total number of 4,575 victims occasioned by oil distribution since 2006 (Adams, 2014:19-24). Such criminal acts have contributed in no small way to the denial of victims' right to life. The foregoing offers insight into the statement by Arinze (2010) that Nigeria is the world's worst case of petro-paralysis; with human security problems considering a total of 1,547 and 4,548 victims nationwide in incidents related to violence in oil production and distribution between 2006–2014 respectively as recorded by Nigeria Watch Project (2014). The abuse of land rights is also an issue in this regard (Aghalino, 2011).

Notably, it is argued that most ancient societies indulged in the practice of ritual violence in the form of human sacrifice usually targeted at some selected individuals for specific purposes to address a specific want at a particular place and time thereby demonstrating a fascinating value (Toyne, 2015). Examples are the Tu`cume on the Northern Coast of Peru and the Andean region where archaeological evidence of human skeletons indicate the manipulations of the sacrificed bodies (Toyne, 2015). Also, the denial of people's right to life to enable some individuals to change status by acquiring title is a case in point. In the olden days, some Igbo communities had a place for the title of 'Ogbu-mmadu' (human killer) aimed at honouring any chief whose son can cut off the head of a male captive securely bound before being slain, thereby bringing pride to the father and honour to the son (Basden, 196:135). This practice that was condoned by the kings and elders in some communities in the Southeast simply violated the right to life of the victims most of whom were strangers all in the name of promoting their sons, gaining title and recognition at the community level.

Scholars also suggest that security forces need to prioritise, learn, and put into practice civilian protection by undertaking in-depth, pre-mission and in-mission planning and training to avoid harm, and proactively protecting civilians provision of security to returnees, as well as protection both from crime and revenge attacks (Muhammedally 2014; Muhammedally, 2015:2). Various international instruments have been designed to protect human rights, specifying both the institutional responsibility and the expected periods of application. One of the problems is that humanitarian law that is expected to be effective during armed conflicts between state and non-state belligerent parties is usually violated to the detriment of civilians. According to Okechukwu (2006:12), "even as a basic humanitarian principle, the right to life with dignity reflects in the legal measures on the right to life, freedom from degrading treatment." The legal implications of human rights violations and protection are noteworthy. It has been established that a lack of uniformity in the drive towards protecting inalienable rights by eradicating different forms of violence against some groups and gender can create a legal lacuna.

Human rights are enshrined in global documents in line with the liberal ideology of theorists such as John Locke (1632-1704) namely the Bill of Rights (1971), UK Human Rights Act (1998), the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (1966), the European Convention on Human Rights (1950), the American Convention

on Human Rights (1969), The African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1981), the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948) which affirms in Article 1 that 'all humans are born free in dignity and rights, among other documents that were developed from the tradition of natural rights (Patel & Tyrer, 2011; Joyce, 2006, cited in Patel & Tyrer, 2011). Despite the existence of such instruments, various human rights are still disregarded by state and non-state actors thereby encouraging people to perpetrate violence against their fellow men. Given that violence and war are learned behaviours (Alasia, 2015:47), the United Nations General Assembly (1999) 'Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace explain the relevance of a 'culture of peace in the society, which is seen as "a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life-based on respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of nonviolence through education, dialogue and cooperation"' (cited in Alacia, 2015).

The issue of the right to a fair trial is also critical. Tiwari (2010) maintains that the right to a fair trial is a norm of international human rights law and also adopted by many nations including the U.S.A., Canada, U.K., India which have this norm enshrined in their constitutions. Similarly, Langford (2009) notes that the right to a fair trial (a trial conducted according to correct procedure) is a basic human right and essential for the prevention of the abuse of all other human rights. He conducted a study on the use of fair trials with an example from over 100,000 trials and appeal cases heard between the years 1674-2005, with the argument that the history of fair trial has implications for the debate on the nature of human rights, although seemingly unlikely universal. Corroborating this, Olaoba (2008:186) identifies the precepts of justice which showed how goodness overshadowed evil, with the assertion that "justice and Fairplay characterised the adjudicatory processes in traditional Yoruba society with the agencies of law enforcement (officers of the law)" such as the Oba, chiefs, the town crier, Ogboni, Oba's court (final court of appeal), and age-grades play security roles to forestall aggression. It should be added that the actualisation of justice in every society would be undermined if the agents of law enforcement are not transparent. Notably, the fair trial right has been threatened considering the acts of jungle justice in some countries. For example, one of the world's wildest lynching orgies ever staged was against George Armswood who was 24 years in America, when a mob took the

law into their hands and killed him after being accused of attacking a white woman (Azikiwe, 1970:194).

There are apparent challenges that influence or hinder the protection of human rights in different contexts. Such challenges range from institutional accountability to monitoring, environmental and national stability, philosophical explanations and contextualisation of the concept of right, the limit of recognition and implementation, policymakers' oversight, the inability of society to provide basic human needs, the politics of economic/military sanctions and countersanctions, inadequate resources, the perennial problem of gender inequality, regime types which sometimes hinder the independence of human rights institutions, state isolation as well as the evolution of criminal states among others. Most of the aforementioned challenges greatly violate the concept of respect for human life which Obasola (2014:33) discourages humans from indulging in acts that harm their neighbours.

Apart from the rising desire to provide basic human needs and prevent exploitation in the society, the lack of trust in the judicial organ of government especially in developing countries makes people take laws into their hands by resorting to self-help by adopting violent means to manage conflicts (Animasahun, 2015). Most of these self-help dispute management strategies sometimes lead to homicide which is a denial of people's right to life. It is also evident from the study by Momoh (1995) that human rights cannot be guaranteed in a military regime considering how various tribunals were set up to try different categories of people who were either imprisoned or executed without any opportunity for appeal.

Apart from the fact that there is evidence that human rights abuses in the electoral process rather portray democracy as a threat to order in a nation (Jahangir & Shafi, 2013), it should be stated that the activities of electoral thugs have also posed a serious challenge to the protection of human rights in the electoral process mainly due to their proclivity for creating an atmosphere of negative peace, sporadic shootings and issuance of threats to electoral commission's officers to cooperate for them, and voters to either vote for their choice candidates or never mind coming to polling units to avoid being attacked. Such violation of rights is usually occasioned by their bid to tamper with election materials by forceful seizure to falsify results. Their actions not only limit voters' freedom of movement and association but also expose them to

danger in the form of physical and psychological violence. For instance, in the early 1990s, political thuggery was described as a hydra-headed monster when thugs poured acid on one of the leaders of the Social Democratic Party, Prince S. Adeyemi to the extent that he lamented, “I never thought I could suffer like this in politics. I thought I could operate anywhere because I operate fairly with everybody” (New Nigerian, December 1, 1991:7; National Concord, November 23, 1991:16). The foregoing reveals that the act of human rights violation exposes victims to untold suffering that sometimes receive little attention from the leaders and is not always prevented by security operatives who are expected to protect lives and property.

### **2.2.5. Coping with human rights violations**

The violence associated with human rights violations requires a coping mechanism by the victims either during or after the incident. It is assumed that every coping mechanism can enhance safety for sustainable livelihoods, but sometimes, the contrary can be the case as the work by Bagi (2015) on the survival strategies and social composition of soldiers reveals for instance, that despite volunteering for military service from the late 1520s (to regain their means of subsistence, improve their lot, increase their pay, benefit from the spoils of war which was financially profitable, and associated social advancement), German soldiers who offered their service in the border fortresses and field units of the Imperial and Royal Army during the wars against the Ottoman Empire they fought on the territory of the Kingdom of Hungary in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries; enlisted to escape poverty and starvation, sometimes serving without weapons, ended up facing challenges of mortality, epidemics, the vicissitudes of the weather, and the constant deprivations caused by idle mercenaries, to the extent that they only supported themselves through fraud and deceit, and use of coercion to plunder their surroundings. Aksan (1995) argues that during the 1768-74 Russo-Ottoman War, the number of security forces determined the nature of food supplies and storage patterns, although an average Russian soldier during this period escaped hunger to sustain the right to food by purchasing his provisions or forage within the neighbourhood of the battlefield.

In their study, Alexander and Klein (2009) cite the Stockholm syndrome as a means of coping and surviving since it certainly enables, on many occasions, hostages to deal with life-threatening circumstances; and the positive relationships between the victims



and their captors influenced the hostage-takers to bond with their captives. Since many victims are not allowed to enjoy their freedom of movement, the main responsibility is for them to cooperate. It means that such cooperation is aimed at escaping the extortionist threats that cause harm (Best, 1982). But it remains to be seen how such strategy can aid a positive relationship between kidnappers and other perpetrators who violate the rights of their neighbours and other residents of the community, through torture, physical attack, and denial of the right to housing, an adequate standard of living, right to healthcare among others.

It is necessary to also identify the coping strategies in the context of human rights abuses by neighbours especially when kidnapping is involved. Most studies have not given adequate consideration for the coping mechanisms adopted by residents of communities in response to the abuses by kidnappers, and this makes it imperative to investigate among other things, the patterns, consequences and measures adopted to curb and cope with criminality at the community level, although most of the existing literature aptly capture the cases of violations that involve governments or state actors and human rights activists, insurgents and political office holders which also explain the ability of transnational actors to mobilise thousands of people to protest against such inhuman actions (Bunte and Vinson, 2016; Fleay, 2012; Schlund-Vials & Martínez, 2015, Obe, 1997; Agozino, 2021; Okoye & Tsado, 2021).

Given that kidnapping is human right abuse, a noteworthy case in point is the boom for private security firms, a growing number of international security firms that now teach kidnap prevention, publish reports on hazardous areas and negotiate ransoms in Brazil and other countries in Latin America, where they counsel families and companies, teach them the strategies of kidnapers and help them to cope psychologically (Awake, 1999). In the context of this study, such initiative was not at the community level as stated earlier, but rather aimed at revenue generation. Coping or surviving during physical violence is highly critical. In Ghana and Nepal for instance, Andikrah and Andikari (2014:316-317) note that most of the accused witches who are females usually seek refuge in prayer camps and witch sanctuaries, and also reveal that such category of people is mainly illiterate, undereducated, unemployed and poor, with little probability of knowing their civil, political, legal or human rights.

Vermeulen and Greeff (2015) carried out a study on the resources of family resilience that help families cope with child sexual abuse and found that they utilised internal and external resources namely the parents' relationship with their children, children's ability to cope with abuse, knowledge of children's emotional needs, relationship with siblings; support of extended family members, friends and local community-based non-profit organisation.

People's coping strategies during times of threat to their safety helps them to endure the harsh environment. According to Schlund-Vials and Martínez (2015:554) "it is through the eyes of victims, witnesses and protectors that audiences of reportage of human rights are typically asked to cognise and weigh the gravity of wrongs; ... it is with victims, and not perpetrators, that audiences are expected to identify emotionally." To cope is to seek reliable ways of surviving any life-threatening situation in society.

### **2.3. Theoretical framework**

The issues related to the incidents of kidnapping can be approached from different models and theoretical perspectives. While the theory of lifestyle, routine activity, rational choice theory and economic theoretical perspectives have been deployed in this regard and critiqued extensively in the literature (Arnold et al., 2005; Etebu, Buseni & Coleman, 2010; Hindelang, *et al*, 1978; Oyemwinmina & Osazuwa, 2016; Siegel, 2005; Ukandu, 2011), it is noteworthy that some of them offer insight into the psychological, biological, or social factors that motivate the criminal act. In addition, the models of kidnapping also demand scholarly attention. The analysis is informed by invasion and routine models, routine activity, crime pattern and social control theories which explain how the trends, causes and consequences of kidnapping in a rural community like Ovom Ama-Asaa contribute to human rights abuses, and the mechanisms that can be adopted to reduce recurrence. In this study, these theoretical considerations serve as the framework.

#### **2.3.1. Routine activity theory**

Routine activity theory (RAT), which was propounded by Lawrence E. Cohen and Marcus Felson (1979) and advanced by Felson, remains one of the most relevant theories in the field of crime science. RAT discusses the significance of daily exhibition of behaviours to enhance the way people understand the patterns of criminal acts (Clarke & Felson, 1993; Rossmo & Summers, 2015). Such acts may be targeted at humans or material things that make life enjoyable (Felson & Cohen, 1980). The RAT is commonly used to examine and analyse the trends and behaviours of individuals in society with an emphasis on human actions (Rossmo & Summers, 2015). The theory posits that incidents take place the moment some elements combine at any location and period such as an offender that has a significant motivation, an easily reachable target, and inexistence or the incapacitation of guardians like stakeholders that would have cautioned perpetrators such as parents, traditional leaders, security operatives and other state authorities (Cohen, & Felson, 1979; Miro, 2014). RAT emphasises that variation of criminal acts considers timing, scenes of incidents, and the involvement of offenders and victims, but the location remains more critical considering the dimensions of the crime (Hipp et al., 2004; Delice, 2011). The RAT focuses on exploring and understanding criminality as the occurrence of negative activity, showcasing how the act is linked to particular locations and periods with a significant impact on human survival and environmental stability (Miro, 2014). This theory reveals that there are reasons why individuals move about due to various reasons like “dinner, drink, picnic, and other entertainment, in warm and hot seasons”, and when people stay beyond the active hours of the day, they are at risk of being attacked during odd times at public spaces (Delice, 2011:141).

According to Delice (2011:140):

These activities range from formal work to leisure activities, to the methods that people utilize to acquire food, shelter, education and other basic needs. If anybody often goes out at night for a drink, and she or he chooses a bar close to downtown, she or he is more likely to become a victim of a crime.

The foregoing indicates that the failure of security agencies and people to do their jobs contributes to the level of criminality and insecurity. Apart from the capacity to commit the crime (such as access to arms), most of the perpetrators are motivated by

factors that include greed, availability of highly attractive targets, the incompetence of the forces of order and poor footprints of state security providers, weak criminal justice system among others. For instance, daily actions like working, schooling, religious worships, and vocations, going on vacation to different enclaves, sometimes exposes people to the risk of victimisation, while those without high outing do not have much threat.

As far as crime prevention is concerned, the theory can guide policymakers, practitioners and police organisations to develop and generate effective policies and applications to reduce crime rates (Miro, 2014). In essence, this is significant for initiating measures for curbing crime and associated insecurity.

### **2.3.2. Social control theory**

Travis Hirschi developed the theory of social bond or social control in 1969 intending to offer more insight into the factors that cause delinquency. Being aged like human society, social control examines deviance to use sanctions in discouraging illicit acts, because deviant behaviours downplay the sanctity of human existence which is rooted in positive peace and intergroup relation; and this justifies reasons behind the “development of social control system” by stakeholders (Onyima, 2015:96). Social control explains how groups and institutions effectively use norms to regulate human conduct, through formal and informal means, to make individuals accountable for their actions which promote non-delinquent behaviours (Intravia, 2009; Aslan, Rosinaite & Khojanashvili, 2019).

Failure of social bond offers insight into how individuals and groups take rule of law for granted and go as far as engaging in criminality. As Hirschi (1969: 83-109) asserts, that idle hands are creating opportunity for the devil to gain access to working with them, to the extent that deviance is explainable by poor bonding within social institutions, indicating family failure that makes it easy for people to downplay social norms that motivate anti-social acts. The effectiveness of social bonds, therefore, discourages groups or individuals from getting involved in reprehensible acts that constitute criminality.

It is not disputable that when much-needed bonding is missing, with people failing to embrace conventional norms, there would be a high probability for people not to mind

abusing norms and still expect to escape without being sanctioned by authorities who would have responded appropriately is the if the social control was effective (Rankin & Kern, 1994; Melossi, 2008; Skardhamar, 2009; Dahlback, 2016). With the core elements that include being attached, getting involved, believing, and being committed, it is obvious that delinquency can only increase the moment would-be offenders fail being attached to guardians, parents or other stakeholders (Chriss, 2007). So, offending, therefore, become synonymous with failed family attachment, thereby creating the platform and motivation for individuals to engage in criminality, with them throwing caution to the wind without considering the repercussions. Because the processes of negotiation and ransom payment are hidden from the glare of security agencies, it is difficult for them to track and apprehend offenders due to fear of victims' execution in captivity (Best, 1982). Consequently, flaying security providers and social control stakeholders for lacking the needed tact in taming kidnapping becomes problematic and disputable.

Strengthening social control measures depends on the approaches adopted by stakeholders whether formal or informal, with the latter involving families, communities and religious movements while the former concerns the use of criminal justice institutions and other government agencies to discourage crimes (Melossi, 2008; Mutegi & Muna, 2021). The long term effect of these approaches would be an entrenched attitude of lawfulness, avoidance of harm and appreciation of nonviolence. This is instrumental in discouraging visible and invisible violence and criminal offending.

In summary, from the delinquency standpoint, the weakness of attachment implicates communities for not strengthening bonds. Thus, the poor, family attachment should even attract community interest in investigating and identifying gaps that motivate criminality especially when belief may determine the acceptance of crime indulgence or prevention, and mindset change would be more efficient than intelligence-led security efforts (Schreck & Hirschi, 2009; Onyima, 2016). It is noteworthy that Albert (2003:56) describes many individuals engaging in crimes as the people found in the streets especially in the cities of West Africa from the 1970s when street gangs increased criminality owing to anti-social behaviours that could be traced to "single parenting." It then means that any childhood experience that has close parenting

bonding cannot easily be exposed to criminality as far as belief, commitment and attachment are concerned.

One of the takeaway lessons from this framework is that when the family fails as the first agent of socialisation, the community is supposed to step in and intervene by calling those found engaging in misconduct behaviours to order, and strengthening the social bonds would create awareness on the necessity of improving the value for the avoidance of lawlessness (Aslan, Rosinaite & Khojanashvili, 2019). The linkage between social control theory and the trends, causes, patterns, and consequences of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa is that if families, community and other stakeholders were able to identify the risk and pattern of kidnapping at the latent phase, it would have been difficult for offenders to be emboldened in threatening people with the act and harm. So kidnapping became the norm because perpetrators disregarded family/communal social control. In the case of Ovom Ama-asaa, it can be said that kidnapping became prevalent due to disregard of intimate attachments and norms, which made the perpetrators feel free to adopt the crime which violates human rights, without any concern about social disapproval or condemnation by community residents.

### **2.3.3. Crime Pattern Theory**

Brantingham and Brantingham (1984; 1991) highlight the connection between individual motivation and the spatiotemporal aspects of routine activities of individuals to crime events (cited in Groff et al, 2014:131).

The authors emphasise that:

Crime is the product of varying initial conditions under which the decision processes leading to criminal events unfold. The likelihood of a criminal event transpiring depends on the backcloth, the site, the situation, an individual's readiness, activity patterns, and the distribution of targets (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1993:265; cited in Groff et al, 2014:132).

The theory explores how behaviour patterns (of offenders) enhance understanding of crime site selection (Brantingham & Brantingham, 1991; cited in Groff et al, 2014). Determining locations that are isolated and areas, where victimisation could be

favourable, are patterns significant in this regard. It is evident that as people move about their routines, they can identify potential crime opportunities (Groff et al, 2014). For instance, some criminals have a habit of walking around a community to study the movement and achievement of their targets or potential targets.

This study views crime pattern theory as relevant because it links both the routine activity theory and social control theory. In essence, it is a linking cord of routine activity theory and social control theory. It is relevant in explaining the trends, causes, patterns and consequences of kidnapping, the modus operandi of kidnappers and the efforts of community stakeholders in curbing the crime. It offers insight into the offenders' choice of kidnapping models (such as invasion model and routine model), selection of targets and strategic locations.

#### **2.3.4. The Models of Kidnapping**

##### **(a) Invasion Model**

The invasion model is a type of kidnapping for ransom that focuses on a strategically planned aggression by kidnapping gangs, where targeted locations are raided or ransacked for a large number of individuals that are regarded to be valuable targets; and the act involves a broad environmental survey and information mapping and assessment of people residing or operating at the locations of interest, identification of security provisioning measures in such spaces, mapping of assessable routes of escape, with kidnap victims and choice of the time to execute the act (Taylor, 2016; Onuoha, 2019). To the kidnappers, their ability to properly map out the available escape routes, possible obstacles, identification of any existing security arrangement in the target areas, risk factors ahead, allocation of time to facilitate their achievement of plans, and to prevent the risk of being apprehended in the process. This preparation, to them, is critical considering their mission to gain access to an area where people would be taken unawares in a compound or crowded place. The identification of the categories to be listed for the act before launching an attack, as quickly as possible makes the crime easily achievable. Thus, this model of kidnapping needs a high amount of logistics capable of facilitating transport, mobility, arms procurement, and housing while the operation lasts, and requires strategic intelligence analysis on the part of kidnappers (Onuoha, 2019; Grana & Windell, 2021). The foregoing is pertinent

considering how they must use arms and violence to coercively intimidate their targets and neighbours to submit and discourage any form of intervention.

The gang criminality that characterises the invasion model shows the level of offenders' sophistication as they exhibit expertise in weapons use. Although, some scholars argue that the outcome is usually a massive movement of unfortunate targets, the kidnap of a large number of victims that eventually end in ungoverned spaces, not all kidnapers who utilise the invasion model succeed in more than one target as desired. Their camps are usually situated in creeks and forests which are hardly reachable to security operatives who struggle to access such dangerous environments (Onuoha, 2019; Tar & Safana, 2021). It is easier for kidnapers to target schools, churches, estates of residence and villages where the footprints are missing. Even when they are present, the strategy of kidnapers can displace the security operatives who are sometimes gunned down during operations due to their use of sophisticated weapons. By the end of such operations, it would have been easy for kidnapers to carry away the people they aimed at almost at the same period.

#### **(b) Routine Model**

This model explains the type of kidnapping that is traditional especially as it is executed by the groups involved. They are highly organised criminal groups engaging in regular abduction which manifests in form of a cycle as they attack their targets with the core aim of kidnapping them. Conflict, security and experts in crime science understand the pattern of kidnapping incidents occurring along with the phases that pass through six stages namely, the choosing of targets, mapping out of plans, deploying of attackers from the gang, execution of the plan, disappearance with the victims, and ransom demand (Taylor, 2016; Onuoha, 2019). This means that if they are not able to launch the formidable attack, it would be difficult for them to succeed in escaping with the targets let alone being in the advantageous position of extorting money from them.

It has been revealed by Stewart (2010) that routine model facilitates the process of identifying the potential targets who would turn out to become victims when executed, engage themselves in proper planning of the criminal act, ensuring safety throughout the captivity period and negotiation; conduct the abduction and secure the hostage; successfully leverage the life of the victim for financial or political gain, and then



escape. Although other types of kidnapping for ransom may or may not adhere to the pattern of the phases discussed here, this model has a sequence set to make the act successful with the minimum obstacle.

Several revelations by those apprehended in the act in different parts of Nigeria, exposing their gangs' modus operandi in displaying professionalism in serially kidnapping of their victims in many locations indicate a routine model. Notable are some reports of kidnapping in Nasarawa, Abuja, Zamfara, Kaduna among other locations (Okolie, 2017). Many victims of this routine model are people of high value in society, including foreigners and indigenes in different professions, to the extent that even the clergy and political elites are no exception. Two factors determine and indicate whether targets are highly attractive or not namely, (a) their financial value based on the amount of money they are likely to have and their capacity to pay in exchange for safety (b) the probability of them being taken away into captivity without their propensity to resist the threats and harm in the process of executing the act. With such indicators, the probability of taking the victims into captivity will be executed without minding the delay (Onuoha, 2019). The interest of these individuals/gangs is backed by their professionalism in tracking the target down to captivity. Unfortunately, the routinisation of this crime does not stop the gangs from targeting more people after each successful operation to the extent that the ability to pay ransom does not always guarantee safety as some kidnapers in various parts of the world were notorious for killing those that even paid ransoms.

The difference between the invasion model and the routine model is that the invasion model is more visible than the routine model because people are usually alerted when the invasion model is adopted.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Research design**

A combination of case study and exploratory research designs was adopted. The case study research design facilitated the in-depth study of the trends, causes, patterns and consequences of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa. It got data that explained the issues concerning kidnapping in the community. It traced the evolution and consequences of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa. Similarly, the exploratory research design guided the field investigation and provided a detailed investigation of the situation in Ovom Ama-asaa. It offered insight into the historical details of kidnapping incidents in the community, from the trends, patterns to the persons at risk, the modus operandi of kidnapers, consequences of kidnapping, and the measures adopted to contain the spatial spread across the seven villages.

#### **3.2 Study area**

The study focused on Ovom Ama-asaa in the Obingwa Local Government Area of Abia State. Ovom Ama-asaa was created in 1977. It has seven villages. Each village has a head who reports to the king of the community. The main language spoken by the people is Igbo, especially the Ngwa Igbo dialect, but other subgroups like Mbaise, Ohafia, Anioma, Owerri, Arochukwu, Awka, Abakiliki etc are also found in the community. Because of these groups, other Igbo dialects are spoken by these migrants who use Igbo Izugbe or their type of Igbo to communicate. But with time, no indigenes gradually understand to speak Ngwa language which makes their communication fluent. These migrants from the bulk of traders, civil servants, proprietors of schools and other businesses like artisans in the community.

In Ovom Ama-asaa, there are entry and exit routes through which people access different locations. These routes have been helpful to farmers and traders, in their bid to transport commodities from the community which is an agrarian community where the availability of farm produce/food crops enable women to support their families.

### **3.3 Target population**

The study population consisted of the males and females who live in the community. The community has an estimated population of about 8,000, according to the 2006 population census. The target population included male and female youths, adult men and women, as well as the victims of kidnapping, such as those kidnapped and released after payment of ransom, the people who were threatened but not kidnapped, the people that relocated from the community and later returned, their relatives and community stakeholders. About 20 victims of the acts of kidnapping were given adequate attention by the researcher during the field investigation that lasted for 12 months at different intervals. The people were strategic to the study because they had first-hand information as eyewitnesses. This facilitated an adequate understanding of criminality.

### **3.4 Sample size and technique**

The portion of the population from which data was collected was 54 respondents. This was based on the need to accommodate informed and interested participants within the community for an in-depth understanding of the situation. The sample was chosen to gather data from all the villages. The respondents were drawn from Epomiri, Umuanunu, Mbaraikoro, Mbaraugba, Obikabia, Umuokoro and Umuokenye. These villages are clans (with the same ancestry) that make up the Ovom Ama-asaa autonomous community. These villages had experienced cases of kidnapping. Also, some villages were more vulnerable to the incidents of kidnapping than others because of environmental factors, geography, location and concentration of kidnappers whose activities were not checked at the latent stage due to poor social control measures.

Purposive sampling was utilised while choosing the sample size of this study because the areas had experienced incidents of kidnapping.

### **3.5 Sources and methods of data collection**

The study made use of primary and secondary sources relevant to the actualisation of its objectives. The primary sources included interviews, focus group discussion (FGDs), and Palace Council records on community safety collected from the Secretary while the secondary data were extracted from the existing literature, namely journals, books, newspapers, magazines and policy briefs published by experts in the field of peace studies.

The ethnographic method enabled the researcher to study kidnapping in the context of Ovom Ama-asaa, with a combination of FGDs, observation of meetings held by stakeholders in the community, key informant interviews (KIIs) and in-depth interviews (IDIs). This method made it easier for the researcher to meet the respondents at their convenient times in their homes, which was crucial to gathering data. The FGDs and interviews were done at locations that protected the privacy of the respondents as they desired, without exposing them to the public.

This method of data collection made it possible for the researcher to learn about the daily life of the people in the context of kidnapping. The respondents were able to discuss the surge, their worries and the extent of community initiatives aimed at countering the menace of kidnapping.

The ethnographic method facilitated the study of criminal victimisation especially the patterns and consequences of kidnapping which enabled the researcher to find out from the respondents their experiences and how they were affected by the activities of kidnappers. This was achieved through screening questions that provided incident reports on the trends, causes and consequences of kidnapping, the interplay between invasion model and routine model in Ovom Ama-asaa, particularly how kidnappers adopted the models to negotiate for ransom directly with targets and victims instead of their relatives.

Specifically, participant observation created the opportunity to study and document the joint problem-solving intervention of the weekly palace council's community security

review. While a tape recorder was used during conversations, the researcher recorded observations in field notes. As part of ethnography, the transect walk enabled the researcher to move around the community to understand the nature of the problem, how the people have been involved in addressing it. This also offered the researcher the opportunity to gather information on the attributes/locations of forests, associated risks and how they were used by the kidnappers as unmonitored spaces. This explains why the researcher was able to use diagrams to map the interaction between kidnappers and their victims, thereby enhancing understanding of how several routes have been used by both kidnappers and the traditional security providers to execute the act and to curb it respectively.

**Table 3.1: Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)**

<b>S/No.</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Respondents</b>
1	Ovom	two FGD sessions: 8 males (involving youths and elders in each group)
2	Ovom	one FGD: 8 females (women and girls)

Table 3.1 shows the FGDs conducted. Three (3) FGD sessions involving 8 participants each were conducted with victims of kidnapping and their relatives. The participants were purposively selected. The discussions focused on the vulnerability of the people to kidnapping, particularly the targets of kidnappers, how kidnapping violated their rights and the consequences of kidnapping in the community.

**KIIs:** Twenty key informant interviews were conducted with some victims of kidnapping, the village heads and the king, who were knowledgeable about how the community became prone to kidnapping. The main information sought in the KIIs were the factors responsible for the surge in incidents of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa and the policy measures for taming them.

**IDIs:** Ten in-depth interviews were conducted. The IDIs involved the clergy, elders from each of the villages that make up Ovom, women leaders in Ovom, and NSCDC officers living in the area. Most of these people were stakeholders knowledgeable about the community under investigation.

### **3.6 Research instruments**

The study employed a Key Informant Interview (KII) and In-depth interview guide with open-ended questions. The interview schedule and FGD schedule facilitated data collection. These instruments determined the nature of field investigation and platforms for discussions between the researcher and the respondents. The KII and IDI guide focused on the issues that caused kidnapping, trends, patterns and consequences of incidents in the community. The interview guide facilitated the discussions with respondents at convenient locations including the Palace Council. Also, the researcher had to walk around the community to identify and study the areas mentioned by respondents during the discussion as part of the ethnographic study.

### **3.7 Method of data analysis**

Trend analysis was used to track the occurrence of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa. It is a method of data analysis in conflict studies and violence research which focuses on

the trends of a phenomenon over time. It is used in the analysis of both contemporary and historical patterns of conflict or violence in society (Elkahlout, 2018; Umofia, 2018). This method was adopted to find out whether kidnapping decreased or increased in the community between 2006 and 2016. Frequency count, percentages, and composite line graph were used to analyse the trends.

Also, trend analysis was combined with the problem (crime) analysis triangle, which originates from routine activity theory and has crime-prevention value. This crime-prevention methodology provides the problem analysis triangle which was used to track the elements that make up the trends of kidnapping in the community. In achieving this aim, content analysis especially theme mapping was used to support the trend analysis generating data on the causes, patterns and consequences of incidents in the community.

### **3.8 Ethical consideration**

During the fieldwork, informed consent was given by the interviewees who provided such opportunity by permitting the researcher to engage them with discussions on kidnapping trends, causes, patterns and consequences across the community. With such consent, they voluntarily joined in the scheduled FGD sessions and interviews at different periods after they got more explanation on the purpose and scope of the study. This made them understand the intellectual context of the study. The king and chiefs explained the significance of the research to rural and urban community safety. The chief of Epomiri village also informed the people about the study.

However, many of the respondents agreed that their involvement would be anonymous.



## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS**

This chapter presents the data and discussion of findings.

#### **4.1 Objective One: The incidents of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa**

This section responds to the question of what are the causes of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa? Answering such a question would enhance understanding of the factors that led to incidents and the trends.

There was an increase in a kidnapping when the majority of the youths realised that some people they knew succeeded in getting ransom from their victims. It started being a major security threat because many youths in almost every part of the community began to accept this crime as a way of life. At this stage, most of the elders put in little effort to stop the menace of kidnapping. With the poor early response, the situation increased in intensity from 2009, when the kidnapers began to adopt the invasion model, by going to meet their targets at home rather than waiting for them at strategic places in the community. But the increase became more pronounced in 2010.

Most of the youths realised that kidnapping should not always focus on highly attractive targets (HATs), especially in such a rural community. Consequently, hundreds of people have been kidnapped in Ovom Ama-asaa since the surge in the kidnapping. These included chiefs, businessmen and businesswomen, bankers, civil servants, academic and non-academic staff of the National Institute for Nigerian Languages, mechanics, artisans and other low-income earners. The study revealed that different factors contributed to the surge of kidnapping in the community.

#### **Trend analysis of kidnapping: The identified number of victims kidnapped**

To examine the differences in trends (decrease and increase between 2006 and 2016), the trend analysis utilised frequency count, percentages and composite line graph to analyse the impact of the phenomenon on the victims of kidnapping. The number of people kidnapped was generated from the field investigation as mentioned and pointed out by the informants.

**Table 4.1.1: Number of male and female individuals kidnapped between 2006 and 2016**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Number of people kidnapped</b>	<b>(%)</b>	<b>Male</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>%</b>
2006	12	1.1	10	0.9	2	0.2
2007	29	2.6	20	1.8	9	0.8
2008	46	4.1	36	3.2	10	0.9
2009	75	6.7	70	6.3	5	0.4
2010	240	21.5	200	17.9	40	3.6
2011	350	31.4	290	26.0	60	5.4
2012	180	16.1	140	12.5	40	3.6
2013	85	7.6	72	6.5	13	1.2
2014	62	5.6	55	4.9	7	0.6
2015	25	2.2	18	1.6	7	0.6
2016	12	1.1	9	0.8	3	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1116</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>920</b>	<b>82.4</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>17.6</b>

Source: Field investigation through transect walk and discussions with the people.

Table 4.1.1 shows that 12(1.1%) people were kidnapped in 2006, out of which 10(0.9%) were males and 2(0.2%) were females. In 2007, 29(2.6%) people were kidnapped, out of which 20(1.8%) were males and 9(0.8%) were females. In 2008, 46(4.1%) people were kidnapped, out of which 36(3.2%) were male and 10(0.9) were females. In the year 2009, 75(6.7%) people were kidnapped, out of which 70(6.3%) were males and 5(0.4%) were females. In 2010, 240(21.5%) people were kidnapped, out of which 200(17.9%) were males and 40(3.6%) were females. In 2011, 350(31.4%) people were kidnapped, out of which 290(26.0%) were males and 60(5.4%) were females. In 2012, 180(16.1%) people were kidnapped, out of which 140(12.5%) were males and 40(3.6%) were females. In 2013, 85(7.6%) people were kidnapped, out of which 72(6.5%) were males and 13(1.2%) were females. In 2014, 62(5.6%) people were kidnapped, out of which 55(4.9%) were males and 7(0.6%) were females. In 2015, 25(2.2%) people were kidnapped, out of which 18(1.6%) were males and 7(0.6%) were females. In 2016, 12(1.1%) people were kidnapped, out of which 9(0.8%) were males and 3(0.3%) were females.

The table showed a surge in the incidents of kidnapping between 2009 and 2011 due to the rapid increase of victims affected by the crime across the seven villages in Ovom. There was also a significant decrease in the number of victims affected by the crime from 2012 to 2016, with 2016, 2015 and 2014 being the lowest, respectively. Although there was a decline in 2012 from the previous year (2011), the years 2006 to 2009 fared better, as there were less than 80 victims each. From the victims' survey shown in the table, it is obvious that the surge portrayed 2011, 2010 and 2012 as the most dangerous years as far as kidnapping is concerned in the history of the community. However, the police at the headquarters could not document incidents due to the

failure of the community members to inform the police. Both individuals who paid a preventive ransom and those held in captivity were afraid of reporting to the police. This situation is what scholars describe as invisible violence. According to Makai (2015), invisible means the occurrence of crime or violence without existing documentation by security forces, media and others.

Table 4.1.2: Most dangerous years for males

<b>year</b>	<b>Males affected</b>
2010	200
2011	290
2012	140

Source: Field work

Table 4.1.3: Most three dangerous years for females

<b>Year</b>	<b>Females affected</b>
2010	40
2011	60
2012	40

Source: Field work

## **Factors that contributed to the incidents of kidnapping**

### **i. Non-existence of a Police Station**

In the past, kidnapping was not a known crime in Ovom Ama-asaa, especially when there was a police station in the community. Lack of police visibility has contributed to insecurity. Kidnappers have also enjoyed establishing safe havens in the community. This makes any partnership in fighting crime difficult. Harkin (2018) notes that partnerships between the police and the wider community can go a long way in addressing safety issues. Such partnership would have the desired impact when police visibility is given priority by state security providers.

During the field investigation, most of the interviewees blamed the surge of kidnapping on the non-existence of police stations in Ovom Ama-asaa, particularly in managing the problem from the early stage until it escalated. This is apt as far as the police role in crime prevention and maintenance of law and order is concerned. The police have social control and criminal justice value to the extent that a community that does not have this institution is in danger. One of the elders in the community asserted that:

The police came to Ovom in 1983 when a station was built. Officers promoted corruption and extortion of the people. This made mutual suspicion exist between them and the people. They mounted illegal roadblocks and caused an accident that killed an indigene of Ovom. The vehicle wanted to divert and rammmed into another vehicle while trying to avoid wooden

nails. This made youths burn the police station down. A health centre was later built there to replace the police station (Mr Chijioke, 2017).

Also, another respondent had this to say about the disappearance of state security providers:

We had a police station that was closed down in the early 1980s due to a clash between the youths and police officers. This was caused by an accident that occurred when a trailer crushed a woman in front of the police station after officers attempted to stop the driver. So, after the attack on the police, officers arrested youths of Ovom Ama-asaa and accused them of stealing their guns (Deacon Nwauzor, 2017).

The accusation of the police and the grievance by the community members contributed to the fear of officers and their unwillingness to return to the community. Since then, the community has not had any active presence of the police. It was observed that there is a risk associated with a big community like Ovom not having a police station. This risk made vigilantes emerge as alternative security providers.



Plate 4.1. The primary health care building at Mbaraikoro village. This replaced the police station that was here in the 1980s after a violent protest caused by an accident that led to the death of a pregnant woman at a police checkpoint.

Source: Field visit, 2018



The finding agrees with that of Nwolise (2012:30) who argues that “the Nigeria Police Force is psychologically and structurally too distant from the people they are meant to protect; and do not share or get bound by the values, interests and sentiments of the people.” This psychological disconnect has manifested in the non-existence of police stations in the community. This distance from the community makes it difficult for the police to prevent and detect crime, thereby making state security provisions almost unrealistic in the community. The situation made kidnappers bold in violating people’s rights to life, freedom of movement and other socio-economic rights. The structural distance of the police as state security provider emboldened the kidnappers to establish a kidnapping gang structure with different models of operation, knowing that, before any intervention from outside the community, they would have carried out their plan of taking the victims away to a hidden place where ransom would be collected after negotiation.

The little or sporadic presence of police, which has little impact, is the passage along Opobo Road by Federal Highway Patrol officers who prefer to mount checkpoints at neighbouring communities, like Akpa and Umuogele, as if the people of Ovom did not need police or crime control. Since there is no police station in the community, the researcher visited the Umuobiakwa Divisional Police headquarters, where the police confirmed that victims of kidnapping have the attitude of not reporting incidents and frowned at how most people have gradually accepted the crime as a deviance that attracts high risk when reported to the security agencies. This was caused by their inability to trust the police. At the Umuobiakwa Police Station, officers argued that it was the responsibility of the government to re-establish a police station for the community.

This non-existence of police in Ovom makes it challenging for them to operate from other places due to distance and the usual Nigerian factor inherent in human security. It has led to poor communication between the people and the police, which also contributed to the surge in a kidnapping that has remained underreported by the media. Again, poor telephone networks and poor Internet access have made communication difficult, as Airtel remains the only manageable network in terms of voice and data usage.

## **ii. Source of survival and collapse of traditional values**

The interviews revealed that the joblessness of the youth contributed to the surge of kidnapping incidents. Although the findings in Ovom Ama-asaa were basically linked to highly attractive targets (HATs), most of the perpetrators embraced criminality as the only available source of livelihood. Perhaps, the HATs were not always available; as the routine model recorded decline due to public awareness of their modus operandi, they initiated the invasion model. This model only worked on a few occasions. For instance, one informant revealed that “The victims were not highly attractive on several occasions” (FGD 2, 2017).

Different reasons were given for the increased and sustained kidnapping. Apart from the economic factors that made kidnapping a daily occurrence, the absence of security agencies encouraged getting ransom from potential targets and victims. Also, the poor social control combined with the collapse of traditional values paved the way for the adoption of kidnapping as a way of life, thereby making the perpetrators social nuisance to the community. The field investigation showed that the inability of elders to uphold traditional values also motivated kidnapping. This is where the motivation element of routine activity comes in.

It was discovered that education has gradually become a curse to the community. The secondary school was bushy and there was the poor enrolment of students and poor teacher welfare. The classroom blocks were dilapidated and abandoned. The bad roads from Umuogele and Mbaraikoro contributed to this problem. From the interviews conducted, enrolment of students declined from hundreds during the period that kidnapping escalated to less than a hundred. According to one of the respondents, “School dilapidated. Our secondary school *bu zi oke ohia* (bush) and students there should be pitied” (KII, Youth leader, September 24, 2017). The respondent revealed that the only secondary school in the community was like a forest. This engendered a high rate of school dropouts, who did not understand the gravity of the crime being committed against people.

The significance of taboos is well documented. The failure of youths to observe and regard taboos is responsible for the rapid increase of criminality in many communities (Awofeko, Oyebanjo, and Shogunle, 2020). The respondents also pointed out that poor value for human security occasioned by illiteracy, government neglect, no government presence, and poor access roads greatly increased incidents of kidnapping. A respondent had this to say, “we grade our roads without any support from the Obingwa Local Government and state government; the problem is that parents say no one trained them, and no money to also train their children – hence, ‘*iti boribo na ala elu*’ (a rapid increase of illiteracy)” (IDI, 2017). The researcher was advised not to underrate any child or person, no matter how poorly dressed walking around the streets, as that might be a dangerous informant for kidnappers.

The situation in Ovom worsened because most kidnappers went beyond merely having adequate information about their targets to using their discretion on a potential victim. This was because the secretive lifestyle of some people in finances makes it difficult to identify who has huge sums of money. The capacity to pay is not by appearance, as even those that do not have money can borrow from buoyant relatives to secure their safety.

### **iii. The ungoverned space problem and weak footprint of state security providers**

The existence of several unmonitored places motivated kidnapping and escalated the act because it gave offending persons a significant strategic advantage throughout the area. The finding relates to the finding of Lewis (2016) which maintains that psychological strength and strategic benefits are gained by criminals when there is poor monitoring of some places. Such lapses embolden them to plan criminality especially acts of kidnapping which is usually done in secret before they begin to execute their invasion of homes or routinely start targeting people.

Village forests were not monitored to the extent that their positive value changed to negative as the kidnappers in the community began to use them. Forests have significant benefits with high medicinal value, socio-economic values in Igbo, Bini, the Yoruba and Idoma peoples, and that kola nut which is usually found in forest areas are used for several purposes including divination, traditional marriages, rituals, naming ceremonies, sacrifices, and in making vows and pledges (Nigerian

Conservation Foundation, 1995). Stopping armed gangs from using forests for illicit activities will be helpful to the residents and the resources within the locations.

The argument that the influx of people into urban areas makes them prone to crimes and that “in rural societies, the crime rate is controlled a little bit, because of the social coordination or the principle of kinship which usually prevail” (Paul and Albert, 1966; cited in Anon, 2010:4), has been disputed by the findings of this study as far as kidnapping is concerned. Some of the respondents noted that:

The kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa is characterised by demand for agreement ransom, release ransom, the verbal threat of force, as well as threat of extortion for failing to pay ransom after the kidnap of relatives to the extent that perpetrators even demand as low as ten thousand naira settlement from relatives to avoid being targets. Consequently, kidnapping has triggered the violation of inalienable rights in the community as elders whose children and neighbours’ sons are involved in the heinous acts fail to caution their children, as most of them rather prefer to temporarily relocate to other towns. (FGD 2, July 2017).

The structures that determined and encouraged it cannot be viewed as similar to those witnessed in other Nigerian communities. The field investigation revealed that the community youth organisation was used as a platform to form kidnapping gangs, with different camps established in each of the villages that make up the community. This situation made some residents experience forced eviction, torture and intimidation by the kidnapers, most of whom resided in the community and knew the family members of their targets. In Ovom primary and secondary schools and uncompleted buildings were used as camps and meeting points to plan a kidnapping. Relatives’ awareness of the whereabouts of the victims did not aid their release and neighbours’ knowledge of where kidnapped victims were kept could not facilitate early response as desired.

#### **iv. The problem of inferiority**

The study discovered that inferiority among young people made families discover their perceived inferior status to their neighbours and some saw kidnapping as the fastest way to gain better economic status. Thus, they assumed that with the efforts of their sons, they could become hard-men of influence through the act.

#### **v. The demolition of shrines in villages**

In the past, there were many shrines in the community which were highly potent in social control. Respondents indicated their awareness of the existence of shrines that were no-go-areas in the past and their social control value across the community to the extent that seeing them discouraged crimes due to the fear of spiritual humiliation and punishment by the deities. But most of the shrines usually accessible to members of the community were demolished between the 1990s and 2002, as a result of the rapid influence of Christianity, when many Pentecostal churches began to worship in Ovom (IDI, 2018). Each village in the community had no less than one shrine. These shrines were owned by their ancestors and operated by chief priests answerable to the community. Many of the shrines became vulnerable when people especially the younger generation began to clamour for 'land liberation'. Many village shrines were demolished except the ones owned and operated by native doctors. The fear of the gods declined as the shrines of deities became less visible to those that attempted to engage in crime. For instance, it was found that a shrine located at the entrance of the community, at Mbaraikoro village, ceased to exist when the tree there was cut down more than a decade ago. A Deeper Life Church was built there to replace the shrine.

The abandonment of oracles made divination decline drastically to the extent that most people who would have assisted in using such supernatural powers to address problems of human insecurity created by kidnappers became discouraged and incapacitated. In this regard, premonition got disconnected as people cannot tell what would happen next. If not for the demolition of the shrines and the relegation of the few remaining ones to the forests, divination would have helped contain the organised crime, especially in identifying the perpetrators and their hideouts. This finding tallies with the conclusion of Olaoba (2005), that divination and oath-taking remain critical for peacefulness in communities. This is apt, considering how the fear of oracles would make it difficult for criminals to deny wrongdoing or involvement in criminal operations when apprehended. This is an effective community-based traditional crime control model of human security. The fact that people made the gods distant from them as a result of relocated shrines exposes them to the risk of insecurity.

#### **vi the failure of the education system**

This is the external factor that also contributed to the incidents of kidnapping because the failure of the education system greatly affected the level of school attendance in Ovom Ama-asaa. This showed how youths lost interest in attending the community secondary school in the community.

### **The framework**

Table 4.1.4: Tabular presentation of the linkages between Social Control, Crime Pattern and Routine Activity Theories

<b>S/No.</b>	<b>Theoretical consideration</b>	<b>Security conundrum / contours</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1	Social Control	(a)Conspiracy of silence, poor socialisation and governance failure embolden offenders  (b)weakness of social control motivates victimisation/spread of crime  (c) shows the security challenges faced by operatives and how the society is poorly policed despite incidents of crime	Spread of criminality easily becomes the norm; raises the question about the approach to crime containment;  Ransom payment and insurance by citizens to prevent harm exposes the loss of confidence in the state and other

			institutions; this is also done secretly as they ignore involving security agencies due to people's knowledge about the capacity of offenders to cause harm and confront security forces.
2	Routine Activity	<p>(a) People's movement/freedom of association would become regulated by the crime of kidnapping, generating fear of the unknown</p> <p>(b) Could make life an enduring existence due to associated panic and uncertainty. People would be living with concerns.</p>	<p>Creates room for more successful attacks to be planned if the control measures are not initiated</p> <p>Daily occurrence motivates the adoption of new sophisticated patterns;</p>
3	Crime Pattern	<p>(a) The success of the activities of criminals determines and guides their operational choices</p> <p>(b) The patterns are adopted to perfect execution of the extortive plans</p> <p>(c) associated with environmental and health risks</p>	<p>Determines the volume/nature of ransom collected;</p> <p>Understanding crime patterns assist the forces order to identify ways of countering offenders; kidnappers determine when and how victims are released; Because people know that kidnappers usually get</p>

			<p>their targets, the victims are forced to comply by paying the ransom or even insure the crime by reaching insurance companies in the event of any incident, as part of harm prevention. This thesis calls this safety-insurance ransom.</p>
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Source: Researcher's elaboration

As already presented in table 4.1.4 above, the framework reveals that there are linkages between social control, routine activity and crime pattern in the community where kidnapping became a daily occurrence which people called chi boo anu ozo (Daybreak produces new incidents). So, the weakness of social control created an opportunity for kidnapping to become a daily routine with different patterns. Both the routine activity and crime pattern showed the connection between the geography of Abia State and the incidents of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa.

The significance of geography is also noteworthy. This is because the villages in Ovom Ama-asaa are bounded by communities that share boundaries with other states in Rivers and the Akwa Ibom States. There is a connection between criminal victimisation and the escape routes by kidnappers. Geography played a remarkable role in the act of kidnapping when some kidnappers escaped through communities that share a boundary with Ovom such as Akpaa, Ntigha, Obete, which share a boundary with communities in Ika local government area in Akwa Ibom State, Ukwu communities like Ndoki and others in Abia State that also share a boundary with Rivers State.



## **4.2 Objective Two: The main targets of kidnapping**

### **4.2.1 The targets of kidnappers**

This section responds to the question of which group of persons were the main targets of kidnapping? This will enable people to identify the individuals at risk of the incidents and how the trends generate consequences for those affected. The fear of crime of kidnapping characterised life in Ovom Ama-asaa but was more prevalent between 2010 and 2013 when most of the villages had little effort in using vigilantes. This was complicated by the issue of kidnappers not having specific targets that could be categorised as high-risk individuals who might share key characteristics.

Different groups of persons have been the targets of kidnappers. Apart from residents who have been deprived of comfort as a result of fear arising from the invasion model by kidnappers, many businesses have been affected directly and indirectly. Many shops open for business around midday and close shortly after. Also, many chiefs were affected by the activities of kidnappers, who threatened to kill them for being potential informants that would expose their identity to the public.

Some respondents confirmed that both women and men have been the targets of kidnappers both at home and on their way to the market on different occasions. A well-known welder in the community, whose shop was located along Opobo Road near Ahiafor, was asked to close his shop; the kidnappers repeatedly warned him to stop opening the shop. This was to prevent him from monitoring them, as the area was strategic to their use of the routine model to facilitate their illicit activities. When he refused to hide the warnings, they simply carried away his welding machine, which was his main tool. This action did not only disempower the welder but also deprived him, his wife and children of their source of livelihood. As at the time of this study he had not recovered from the disempowerment and his family still blamed him for not removing the machine at the right time to avoid being perceived as an obstacle to their activity. The shop was shut since 2011 according to key informants. Many people were victims of kidnapping around the spot. In addition, the welder had to depend on farming to feed his family.

The involvement of youths in kidnapping tarnished the image of Ovom Ama-asaa (Chief Elewa, 2017). This made the people of Epomiri vow that no kidnapper would easily escape. The village helped to apprehend over 9 suspected kidnappers. Such

collaborative effort made some groups of kidnappers write a letter threatening to kill the chief in 2010. The chief noted thus:

They wrote a letter to kill me, that I must settle them, and I gave them ₦200,000 in an envelope. They sent the people I do not know to collect the money in my house. I gave them the money for peace and assured them things would get better believe that there are no jobs (KII, Chief S. Eliagwu, 27 June 2017).

The informants revealed that they kidnapped people using a motorcycle, which made it faster and easier for them to manoeuvre the bad roads in the community. The fact that kidnappers collected money from chiefs and other vocal individuals at home to prevent being kidnapped shows that social control was weak or had collapsed in the community. It revealed how traditional values of hard work and respect for deities were disregarded.

#### **4.2.2 The ransom for preventing kidnapping**

Preventive ransom is the amount of money offered to kidnappers to facilitate the freedom and safety of an individual that is threatened with kidnapping, and to prevent them from kidnapping his/her family members. It is believed that when some amount of money that kidnappers want is given to them, it is expected that the individual paying the ransom would no longer be harassed by kidnappers to pay captivity ransom. Such a person would not have to go through the pain and trauma of being captured and forced into a hidden location. Unfortunately, some people could not pay the preventive ransom ranging from ₦10,000 to ₦2000000. Such people ran away from the community.

The respondents stated that the benefits of the preventive ransom to the kidnappers in the community is that it enabled them to get more than five times the amount they would have generated from a single ransom for the release of a victim in captivity. In other words, an individual could be ransomed while at home without being taken away to be tortured in an isolated area.

In most cases, while the kidnappers are the ones benefiting, the victims lose in this regard. The kidnappers run the risk of being tracked down by vigilantes, while the

victims are also at risk if they fail. Before the emergence of the communal security regime, the risk of kidnappers being challenged by the community was minimal.

One significant fact about preventive ransom is that it is a remarkable departure from scenarios where people who have not been targeted go as far as ensuring their safety in the case of any eventuality, so insurance companies could pay for the ransom for their release whenever they are kidnapped, and a situation where people source for money through relatives during the traumatic periods in captivity.

The irony of preventive ransom is the demand for secrecy by the kidnappers, that is the need for the victims to keep whatever threat and transaction with the village merchants of violence to themselves. While it is preventive in some cases, failure of the victims to continue cooperating could lead to communication breakdown and withdrawal of security guarantees by the kidnappers.

Remarkably, offenders did not always exhibit early warning actions before aggressively harassing their targets. Those that witnessed pre-kidnap early warning signals as a result of the actions of the offenders were mainly individuals who were outspoken against the act of kidnapping and were lucky to be warned to either pay the preventive ransom or leave the community to escape victimisation.

The ethnographic study indicated that kidnapping manifests in the form of risk. The attitudes of the kidnappers reveal their desire to execute the activity in different locations where they believe the possibility of apprehending them is low. There is the probability of them not gaining much from demanding ransom after kidnapping people and hiding them in forests/uncompleted buildings. The kidnappers have adequate knowledge of the roads in the community and alternative routes to reach their targets. The kidnappers prefer to inform their targets about the risk of being in captivity without any safety guarantee during negotiation for ransom and even after paying it.

Some targets and victims of kidnapping in the villages reported that they experienced many violations at the hands of the kidnappers who often threatened to attack them at night. In some cases, the incidents resulted in some deaths in two ways: in the process of invasion of homes to take the victims away, particularly when the target attempts to resist being kidnapped; and during the attempted escape to the nearby bushes, which

may result in accidental jumping into pits or sharp objects. One such victim stated thus:

When some guys arrived in front of our home, they started firing into the air without stopping for some minutes. This was aimed at frightening everybody to obey orders from them. But some of us scampered for safety, not minding the danger of jumping into a pit. At the end of the sad incident, we realised that one of our family members was already taken away to an unknown location. He was released after a ransom was paid in an uncompleted building within the community (FGD 1, 2017).

The attempted kidnap of Ovom King was similar to the predicaments suffered by the English kings and Danish kings between 1154 and 1241 in the hands of rebellious relatives and hostile neighbours which led to the kidnap of King Richard I by Germans who demanded huge ransoms for his release; as well as Valdemar II (1202-1241), who was also kidnapped and ransomed (Benham, 2010). The only difference is that the kidnappers did not succeed in capturing the king of Ovom because he left the community for some time before they initiated measures to tame the incidents of kidnapping.

Also, a prominent chairman of Mbaraugba village youths was shot by the kidnappers in an attempt to kidnap him (IDI, Engr. Anyanwu, 2017). This shows how the kidnappers invade people's homes, shoot, search and attack them in their bid to take targets away. To the kidnappers, it is believed that invading a compound enables them to forcefully take away their targets without any delay and to discourage any resistance.

Around 2010, a successful pharmacist was kidnapped and ₦500,000 ransom was demanded from him. He was released after a ransom was paid. He refused to state the amount he paid as ransom. An Ovom youth added that he was always going into hiding thereafter. A respondent noted that: "Kidnapping is fear-generator and has made us preys to *umu ojoo* (bad boys)" (FGD 1, 2017). A respondent noted in the Igbo language that "umuntakiri biara n'anwuru ndi mmadu, churu ha banye n'ime ohia mgbe ha biara" (young boys came several times in search of people, pursuing them into the bush to kidnap them) (IDI, 2018). This became the pattern of their operation aimed at capturing their targets.

Many people, in hundreds, were kidnapped even in churches. This made the people more equipped than before because kidnapping caused a lot of damage, in terms of creating fear, forced disappearances, displacements, and loss of economic valuables. That kidnappers operate from outside is a myth, as no outsider can easily operate. This was confirmed by respondents during the FGDs. One of them stated that:

Kidnappers operate as people that have known their targets from birth, with adequate knowledge of their occupations and sources of income; and this makes it difficult for them to be convinced by victims and their relatives that there is no money to pay the ransom demanded (FGD 3, 2017).

**Table 4.1.3: Individuals at risk**

<b>S/no.</b>	<b>The categories of individuals at risk</b>
1	The leaders in the community and politicians at the grassroots

2	Those with good apartments like flats or buildings with many rooms
3	Businessmen/women and civil servants
4	vocal persons
5	Those that had shopped at hotbeds of kidnapping/strategic places, like junctions or roads linking villages in the community, such as Ahiafor, Umuanunu Junction, Mbaraugba-Mbaraikoro road
6	The people that their children were working in townships
7	Elders that make an impact in the community

Source: Fieldwork, 2017-2018

This study has shown that the occurrence of kidnapping has individual risk factors not necessarily based on the capacity to pay the ransom but being in the position to rebuke or identify perpetrators. Some of the people at risk were either kidnapped or forced to leave the community for being informed on the kidnappers' modus operandi. This is

one of the differences between direct victims and indirect victims. While most indirect victims experienced forceful extortion of money or forced eviction, the direct victims either suffered torture or died in captivity and sometimes after being set free.

Those at risk, for doing businesses around strategic places used by kidnappers are a threat to the operation of the kidnappers because they can easily identify them during operation. The study found that children were not at risk in most cases.

It was found that adults have been more vulnerable as targets than children despite their weaknesses. According to a respondent:

Kidnappers preferred to target adults rather than children. The main reason is that children are seen as minors who should not be targeted for ransom, no matter how big or small the amount would be. When kidnappers invade a compound, any of the adults would end up being a victim and not children. Despite not being targets, most parents planned to keep their children away from the community during the early years of kidnapping (FGD 1, 2017).

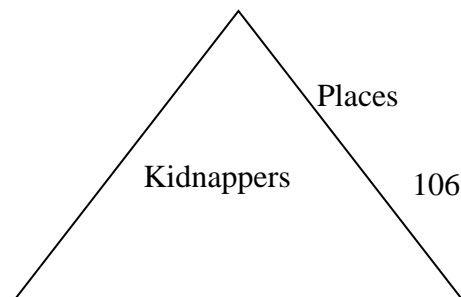
This shows that child kidnapping has not been an entrenched attribute of the insecurity in Ovom Ama-asaa. This is contrary to the fear of many parents who were described as extremely worried about the safety of their children.

The issue of ransom collection without focusing on highly attractive targets (HATs) was revealed in the excerpt below:

Kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa was not only about HAT but based on the need for sustainability. This is so because some kidnappers did not mind collecting any amount offered to them as ransom. People paid for ransoms in thousands, ranging from

₦10,000 to ₦100,000. A landlord whose mother was kidnapped in 2011 had to borrow ₦ 10,000 from his tenant for the release of his mother. He pleaded with his tenant to give him only ₦10,000. Since then, he has not been able to pay the debt (FGD 2, 2017).

Some of the victims had to put tens of thousands together to enable them to pay the ransom. While highly attractive targets (HATs) paid ransoms in millions, lowly attractive targets paid in thousands. It was also found that some kidnappers were considered lowly attractive targets after some HATs fled the community.





Offenders

Targets/victims

Figure 4.1: Problem (crime) analysis triangle

Source: Fieldwork 2017/2018.

In many cases, the ransom was offered as payment for freedom, to prevent further harm, reproach and shame. The character of kidnappers, due to their desperation showed that they were not concerned even if the victims died during the period of

being kept in bondage. Victims were locked up, chained and blindfolded or a combination of the three.

The problem of crime in the context of this study is kidnapping which focuses on ransom. The offender refers to the kidnappers. The place refers to the scenes of kidnapping like homes and other hotspots where people are captured and locations where they are kept. The target/victim refers to those that become victims after kidnapping incidents; they suffer the injury, pain and psychological trauma arising from torture by kidnappers. According to the State of New South Wales Department of Attorney General and Justice (2011), the availability and suitability of targets, as well as the absence, unavailability or indifference of a guardian, emboldens criminals like kidnappers to execute their plans.

The guardians in this context are security providers, particularly state security providers that are the law enforcement agencies. The absence of the police when they are needed most in the community is the failure/weakness of the criminal justice system in Nigeria. When they are not available to intervene and possibly apprehend offenders, the judiciary and prisons which are other components of the criminal justice system will not play their roles. This is to the advantage of offenders (kidnappers). The provision of security would make a place less conducive to kidnapping, enhance the safety of targets and make it difficult for offenders to easily plan and execute the plan.

#### **4.3 Objective Three: The extent to which the rights of victims were violated**

One of the questions that guided the study is that of to what extent were the rights of the victims violated in Ovom? Responding to the question required the understanding of incidents and how the environment created by kidnappers undermines the socio-economic lives of the people. Kidnapping violates the rights of the people in the community. Many forests in different villages were used as hideouts and safe havens for the kidnappers, which facilitated their efforts to get ransoms from victims who were hidden from one part of the forests to another at intervals.

The foregoing is in line with Olaniyan's (2017) and Tar and Safana's (2021) assertions that the increase of forests is utilised by criminals, insurgents, rebels, robbers, for illegal logging, kidnap acts, cultivation of drugs and outlawed transactions. In the case

of Ovom, while the kidnapers used the forest spaces to hide their victims, they did not use it for armed robbery, drug cultivation or insurgency.

The invasion model later became the kidnapers' preferred strategy. It manifested across all the villages as the routine model became less potent, owing to the activities of vigilantes.

People were attacked and threatened in their homes by invading persons whose modus operandi was a source of worry to the people. The invasion model was consistently used to extort their targets in various homes without the knowledge of most neighbours across the villages. Even when neighbours knew about the ongoing incident, there was little they could do owing to the risk of raising the alarm. This was further worsened by the lack of a police station in the community. The kidnapers would disappear before any police arrived from the local government headquarters.

The arrival of kidnapers at homes means two things: either one pays demanded ransom at the spot or schedules a date for payment within a few days, to prevent horrible experiences in forests, palm tree plantations or uncompleted buildings; or surrender to be taken away until the desired ransom is paid. Many people embraced the first option. They accepted to remain at home and pay the kidnapers, having to raise money by any means.

However, some were not lucky to get such option of paying ransom at home. The chief of Epomiri, who was affected said, "The kidnapers threatened to kill me if I refuse to give them ₦200,000, not minding whether I had it or not. I only managed to give them the amount they demanded to save myself and guarantee the safety of my family (Interview, 2017).

This invasion model was aided by the sophistication of the kidnapers and their knowledge about the terrain and the people. Also, the use of motorcycles facilitated this.

According to Deacon Nwauzor, in Mbaraikoro, "Umu kidnapers had sophisticated weapons, which they used to weaken the youth council across the community" (IDI,

2017). Access to weapons commands respect and generates fear. When people have weapons and use them to harass others, it is not easy to challenge them.

There are no banks in the community; people travel far to neighbouring towns for banking. In an interview, it was revealed that the kidnappers kidnapped a woman and collected ₦800,000 and also kidnapped her the second time. They demanded ₦2,000,000. The woman never returned home after the incident and the children decided to stay away from the community and informed the kidnappers they could kill their mother if they liked because they did not have money to pay the ransom. They decided to rent out their apartment. After more than 3 years, the woman was yet to return (Chief Elewa, 2017).

As Figure 4.2 demonstrates, the issue with kidnapping in the community is that a combination of different modus operandi facilitates the activities of the kidnappers who boldly demand ransom sometimes before executing the act. This is called ransom for freedom. Those unlucky to be taken away to unknown locations are forced to pay captivity ransom to regain freedom. The difference here is that the lucky ones are ransomed at home, thereby saving their relatives from the stress of attempting to establish contact with the kidnappers who can be unpredictable in terms of endangering the lives of victims with torture and movement from one place to another. The community has succeeded in containing the invasion model, which is more visible than the routine model.

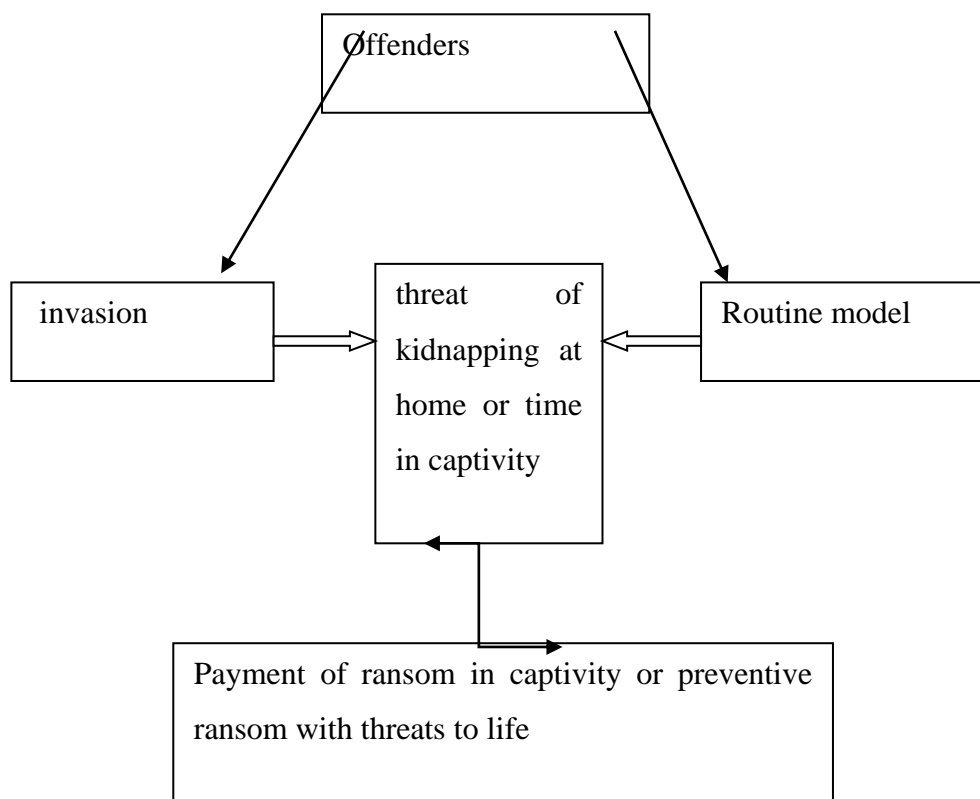


Figure 4.2: The operational oversight of kidnappers and consequences of the act.

**Source:** Fieldwork, 2017-2018

The kidnapers scattered everywhere both day and night to the extent that everybody was being cared for his/her safety (IDI, Engr. Anyanwu, 2017). For most of the residents, since the aim of the kidnapers is to whisk anyone captured away, it is better to run to the bush or even sleep inside the bush around their homes than to be tortured by the kidnapers. As people that already know the consequences of not cooperating with the kidnapers when the ransom is demanded, they consider it more honourable to scamper for safety if possible.

One of the respondents revealed that:

When some kidnapers came visiting around 7 pm three years ago, we had to run to the nearby bush behind our compound. But it was late for one of our family members who was captured near the kitchen. Thereafter, we spent 6 hours inside a pit dug by builders (FGD 3, 2017).

It is apparent that the moment an operation is successful, the next thing is that they establish contact with the relatives. But this is not always the case, as some of the kidnapers can spend a few days interrogating the victims so that they will cooperate. In addition, out of all the stages that facilitate successful kidnapping, the exploitation of the victims and the prevention of the escape of kidnapped persons from apprehension is the most crucial actions to the perpetrators. This is an area that demands active vigilance, as already put in place in Ovom Ama-saa

It was found that not all kidnappings in Ovom involve high attractive targets (HATs), meaning that some incidents were not based on the targets' monetary value or capacity to pay a high amount of ransoms, and not always determined by the probability of easily being taken away.

The kidnappings in Ovom centred on the routine and invasion models, which made things difficult for the community. While the invasion model explains how the kidnapers raided many homes and churches in search of their targets, the routine model offers insight into their capability in planning successful operations from the selection of targets to the collection of ransom money. The insider model is the main factor sustaining this menace.

As noticed in the data, the invasion model was more prevalent in Mbaraikoro and Mbaraugba, while the routine model was the most common pattern across the villages in the community. This could be attributed to the fact that both villages are in the middle of the community.

The respondents noted that a suspected kidnapper suddenly disappeared when rumours about his involvement in the crime spread across the community but he reappeared after more than one year. He received the spiritual backing of his parents who were native doctors. Their effort in giving him fortification empowered him to overcome the plans to apprehend him. His parents were dreaded native doctors who were helpful to many personalities across the community.

This development was confirmed by the researcher during a visit to the home of the suspect. It was made clear to him that as a student, the researcher needed to investigate issues of community safety. He granted an audience to the researcher who was brought by his trusted friend in charge of power bill collection in the community. It was found that the situation made him prefer using the bush path at the back of their building while going out or coming into the compound. The charms, according to respondents, made people not think of raising the alarm when they are operating.

**Table 4.2.1: The hotspots of kidnapping**

<b>S/No</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Model adopted</b>	<b>Consequences</b>
1	Within the home	Invasion model	Made people spend time in nearby bushes and churches at night
2	Shops	Routine/invasion models	Early closure
3	Farmlands	Invasion/routine models	Reduced cultivation and food production
4	Restaurants and palm wine bars	Invasion model/routine model	Reduced sales/patronage
5	Churches	Invasion model	Fear of attending services in the day
6	Wedding and burial ceremonies	Invasion and routine models	Low-key celebrations; late arrival of celebrants and early conclusion of ceremonies
7	Football fields	Routine model	Hindered the community annual football competition involving the 7 villages, as it scared people away



8	Strategic and isolated junctions	Routine model	Reduced movement of people around the junctions
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Source: Fieldwork, 2018

As illustrated in Table 2, the location of kidnapping and the model adopted greatly determined the impact of the act on both the victims and their relatives. The invasion model dominated the respondents' view on how the victims were attacked. They acknowledged that not only businesses have been affected in the form of late opening and early closure. Farmers also experienced a significant reduction in crop cultivation and food production, as many farmlands were deserted owing to fear of kidnapping across the community. Farmers in the community recorded low crop yields as a result of poor or inadequate weeding and lack of sufficient fertilizer application as a result of farmers' occasional visits to the farms. This became a problem for the farmers because Ovom soil requires adequate fertilizer to produce efficiently. The rainy season is usually more problematic in this regard considering how weeds grow. This problem of soil fertility arises because "the continuous farming yearly on a piece of the land reduces its fertility; a form of soil nutrient mining" (Baba, 2017:9).

An issue that dominated responses was how the use of invasion and routine models facilitated kidnapping. This changed the way people operate in the community. Incidents that occurred in restaurants affected customers and the owners of shops whose right to peace, freedom and safety were violated with impunity. Having a business in an atmosphere of fear became a problem for many people. Even shop owners had to sometimes close earlier than expected.

The kidnapers used the invasion model for individuals who proved difficult to get outside their homes by restricting their movement around the community. The invasion model was more lethal than the routine model. The rush that characterised events as a result of kidnapping was caused by anxiety over the activities of kidnapers.

Some incidents became deadly owing to different reasons. “What made incidents turn lethal was not only the failure to pay the ransom but attempts by targets to resist being taken away” (FGD 2, 2017). There were times when the attempt to use delay tactics to buy time for people to inform vigilantes culminated in the killing of the targets by the kidnappers (FGD 3). A man at Mbaraikoro was killed in his home when the kidnappers adopted the invasion model. Probably, he attempted to resist kidnap. The respondents noted that most of the lethal incidents created fear in the community.

The findings of the study are quite supportive of the routine activity theory, invasion model and routine model. The trends of kidnapping fit well into routine activity. The fact that people’s endeavours in daily life make them suitable targets of kidnappers explains the routine activity phenomenon associated with kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa. To a great extent, apart from status, the endeavour or engagements of individuals in the community determined the places they went and their activities. Such activities either prevented or increased their risk of being targets

All these also influenced risk. The routine activity theory explains the modus operandi adopted by the kidnappers, whether invasion model or routine model depending on time, space or location. This is further motivated by the seeming absence of the police who are supposed to maintain law and order.

Routine activity theory explains the variation of kidnapping in time, considering the alteration of some relevant elements that motivated occurrence. For instance, kidnapping was more prevalent in Ovom Ama-asaa in the early years between 2006 and 2013 than between 2014 and 2016 because of the formation of vigilantes who now became guardians for the community. As more people began to relocate or leave in the community during the evening, it was difficult for them to become victims despite being targets.

Also, the formation of vigilantes made some of the people return after being forced to relocate through kidnapping did not abate completely. In some instances, the location of homes exposed some people in Ovom Ama-asaa to being victims without any awareness and resistance of neighbours. These are compounds in isolated areas, like Mbaraugba, Umuanunu and Umuokenye. Some of these buildings are found near

bushes. Some kidnapers would go to isolated areas like bushes, forests and bush paths to select targets based on status and their need to get any available person. They also engaged in kidnapping if they found out that most members of the vigilante group were not around during the day.

#### **4.4 Objective Four: The consequences of kidnapping on the community**

This section responds to the question of what are the consequences of kidnapping on the community? This is done to examine the consequences of human rights violations occasioned by kidnapping.

##### **i. Fear and food insecurity**

The respondents noted that kidnapping has had a very negative impact on the community. One of the consequences of kidnapping is that most people in the community who used to go to the toilet some metres behind residential buildings are now scared to use the pit toilets due to fear of being kidnapped.

Also, the surge of kidnapping has affected the cultivation of food crops and production of food, as many are afraid of going to their farms unaccompanied. It has created a problem for those that do not have family members available to accompany them to farms. This is because, as confirmed by key informants, many kidnapers already know where the farms of their targets are located and would sometimes prefer to either invade farms in the day or trace them to their homes at night.

The incremental wave of kidnapping has affected nightlife, as people could no longer sit or walk out at odd hours. It has affected social cohesion to the extent that friends

who used to drink palm wine together at joints seldom do so again. This makes negative peace dot the community. This finding is in line with that of Nagar (2017:16), which identified how “some households indicated they stopped visiting public places when not accompanied due to fear, with over twenty-two per cent of households refusing to permit their children to engage in leisure or walk around when not monitored by adult relatives.” This implies that the fear of crime also affects the actualisation of human potential.

Kidnapping has negative impacts on productivity. The fear associated with it makes people not engage in productive activities beyond some periods of the day. One of the respondents noted that:

Kidnapping was more rampant in the community between 2009 and 2011 to the extent that most shops in the community were closed before 6 pm daily, while shops in other communities were closing between 7 and 10 pm (IDI, Chiemela, 2017).

The food insecurity created by this problem affected farmers more than others because it made them stay on farms for fewer hours. People involved in the business transaction were forced to find their way home and businesses preferred to close early because of the risk associated with late closure.

The youth leader effectively brought out the consequences of kidnapping by explaining that: “When people are kidnapped or if there is attempt to kidnap a target, they are tortured, beaten and sometimes injured.”

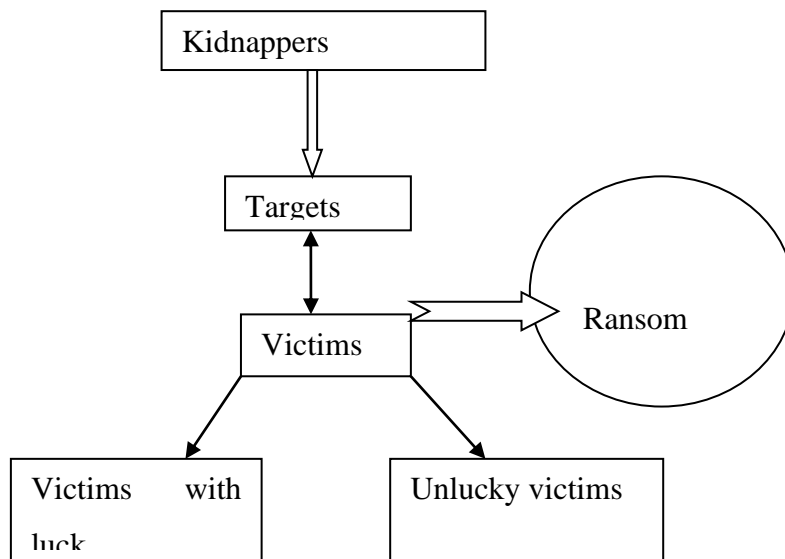


Figure 4.3: Stages of kidnapping from being targets to victims and collection of ransom.

Source: Fieldwork, 2018

As illustrated by the diagram above, kidnappers begin to target people before they become victims. From being targets, people become victims when they are kidnapped. However, not every target eventually becomes a victim.

## **ii. Targeting of people and demand for ransom from victims**

The collection of “ransom” is the ultimate goal of kidnappers whether the victims are lucky enough to survive in captivity or not. The invasion strategy of kidnappers has made it challenging for the vigilantes to track their modus operandi, especially during and after each attack. However, this challenge does not portray the vigilantes as less significant forces of order in the community.

The field investigation revealed that the ability to pay ransom greatly determines whether a victim would be lucky or unlucky. However, while not all lucky victims pay the ransom demanded, as they may be lucky to facilitate their escape, there are situations when some unlucky victims may not be confirmed dead or alive as their whereabouts remain unknown. Also, some victims were set free after some time but later died at home as a result of the sickness caused by the torture experienced while in captivity.

The majority of the unlucky victims experienced all the stages, which Ezeibe and Eze (2012) describe as the imaginative death threat points of kidnapping from the time of capture/operational kidnapping point, period of transit to the hideout, period of incommunicado, interrogation and negotiation for ransom. Throughout all the stages, one of the factors that increase or complicate the victim’s risk is the failure of ransom negotiation, particularly the inability of relatives to positively engage the kidnappers in negotiation. In the case of Ovom Ama-asaa, some victims suffered forceful extortion of money while the unlucky ones died later after release. Both foot movements and the use of commercial motorcycles characterised transit movements of the act. The fact that commercial motorcycle is the major means of transport in the community also exposed unsuspecting people to more risk.

Kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa did not just concentrate on the high attractive targets (HATs). Although most of the victims were highly vulnerable, not all the victims seemed to have the value that perpetrators would celebrate after a ransom is paid. The

ability to pay ransom did not depend only on wealth; having landed property was helpful to some families of the victims.

The patterns of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa centred on two models: the invasion and the routine model. While the invasion model wreaked havoc on many families, causing them the embarrassment of internal displacement and forced eviction, the routine model helped the kidnappers to succeed in targeting people from their homes to isolated areas where the act would be easily executed without much resistance or visibility to the public. Again, while the routine model enabled the kidnappers to lay siege to some of the villages by taking control of strategic points, the invasion model was used to get people who preferred to remain in their homes to be seen moving around the community.

According to the respondents, most of the people that built houses refused to pack into their new apartments and preferred to remain in rented apartments to prevent being seen as potential targets. They believed that having a new house was enough reason to attract kidnappers.

Many landowners lost their land through cheap sales to buyers. However, before the establishment of vigilantes, most of the people that would have wanted to purchase land in the community lost interest owing to the human insecurity caused by the routine activity of the kidnappers. For a long time, non-indigenes who owned land started selling their land to indigenes. Between 2009 and 2012, many who commenced building projects suspended activities abruptly for two reasons: to avoid being persons at risk and the uncertainty of human safety

#### **4.5 Objective Five: The measures for taming the incidents of kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa**

The essence of this section is to examine the question: how effective are the measures for taming the incidents of kidnapping in Ovom?

One would have expected the model of state government in responding to the escalation of kidnapping in Aba to be adopted in countering the crime in Ovom Ama-asaa. The government engaged security forces within Aba and its environs but this was not effectively extended to Ovom.

**i. Anti-kidnapping vigilante option of traditional security provision**

The kidnapers endanger the lives of others without minding the consequences of their actions. Therefore, the community initiated some measures to reduce the threats pending the time the police would establish a station or embark on patrol. It was stated at the king's palace that:

Handling the problem of kidnapping requires wisdom and patience on the part of the King whose community has become the hotbed of human rights abuses occasioned by kidnapping. Some perpetrators never wanted to accept caution as they threw caution to the wind (KII, Secretary, Ovom Palace Council, 2017).

A significant point was also made by the elders during the FGD when they observed in the Igbo language that:

“nchekwa obodo bu ihe di mkpa maka na onye obula kwesiri igba mbo, gbakoo hu na udo na ihunanya chiri eze; ka ejisie ike wezuga ihe ndi n'ewete egwu n'ama Ovom nile (Elders, 2017).”<sup>1</sup>

The role of the Nigerian army in the 2010 intervention that was sustained in many communities is noteworthy. The problem with this is that the people are advised to call the soldiers when there is an attempt to kidnap somebody. Unfortunately for the community, the checkpoints of soldiers are too distant from Ovom; and even when they are called, they have to wait for the directive to intervene, which can take days or weeks. This makes it difficult to apprehend the kidnapers.

This study agrees with Olawale (2017). He observes the significance of security arrangements in crime prevention, which fall into categories like prevention or detection of intrusion, unauthorised entry or trespassing on private property; protection of individuals from bodily harm; providing a reassuring presence; reporting and apprehension of violators; reporting on incidents and call. Most of the people in Ovom Ama-asaa have demonstrated conspiracy of silence as they do not like involving law

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<sup>1</sup> Community safety is very important and should be prioritised by every member of the community, who must ensure that peace and love reign; curbing anything that generates fear across the country like kidnapping for ransom in Ovom. We made sure that kidnapers are flushed out to the extent that anyone caught after pleading with them to renounce crime, did not deserve any form of mercy.



enforcement agencies in terms of reporting incidents since the neighbourhood violence created by kidnapping (within the intimate space) make it threatening for people to report their neighbours involved in the nefarious act.

In Ovom traditional security provision is adopted. It involves using vigilantes who are members of the community to secure the people from threats to life. The community security arrangement serves as an alternative to the police.

One of the elders noted that:

In Ovom, we now have youths who oversee the safety of people. They report to the village chairman, from village chairman to traditional ruler, who then tries to reach the police at Umuobiakwa. The problem is that there is no police in the community; so people cannot easily establish contact with them during emergencies (IDI, Mr Nwogwu, 2017).

The assertion by one of the respondents, Deacon Nwauzor Jonathan that “active youths formed vigilantes by kindred” shows that self-help was adopted to enhance community safety. This was realistic due to the collaborative efforts of the community members. Again, the fact that the community initiated the introduction of tenants at the palace points to their determination to stamp out men of questionable character from the area.

Some chiefs confirmed how the concentration of kidnapping caused insecurity, which made the king and all the chiefs support the establishment of vigilantes that were inaugurated in the palace. This is captured in the excerpt below:

Youth vigilantes (functioning as village watch) at Epomiri and other villages were registered at the community level and inaugurated at the palace by the police from Umuobiakwa and gave them a lecture on how to function (KII, Spokesman, Council of Chiefs, 2017).

This demonstrated the readiness of the community to support any group ready to counter the acts of kidnapping. The king opened his doors to suggestions on how to address the problem because of human security and human rights protection. However, a notable challenge to the efforts is that the police is not actively involved in the security governance process in the community due to the lack of a police station.

From both field observation and interviews, it was found that each village uses its youths enlisted as vigilantes, particularly Umuokoro, Umuanunu, Mbaraikoro, and Epomiri. That of Mbaraikoro remains less visible than others in the community, as most of the members are people that are not expected. Because, on several occasions, the surge of kidnapping with the invasion model made Umuanunu vigilante start mounting roadblocks at night using bamboo sticks. The invasion model was adopted after the kidnappers discovered the modus operandi of the vigilantes.

The king noted that: “Since the kidnappers started invading homes, many people residing in the community became more equipped” (Ovom King, 2018). Attempts were made by the king to convince the kidnappers to come out and renounce crime with the promise to call on the government to rehabilitate them. But the plea fell on deaf ears.

Some scholars have focused their attention on the negative impact of vigilantes, particularly in an attempt to mark community boundaries. There are some concerns about the establishment of vigilantes in various societies where vigilantes are occasionally tempted to engage in cattle-looting and other forms of banditry or collaborate with deeply distrusted government forces (Sen and Pratten, 2007; Verweijen and Brabant, 2017). Their occasional use of force also creates a negative perception (Kyei and Berckmoes, 2021). However, this is not the case in Ovom Ama-asaa, where they are highly trusted as traditional security providers. This finding is contrary to the position of some scholars that, despite vigilantism being lawful violence, “vigilante leaders recruit unstable personalities and criminals who do not reflect the public’s norms, thereby making it difficult for them to get public trust” (Kowalewski, 1991:129). This does not apply to Ovom Ama-asaa, where only trusted indigenes are screened by the king, in collaboration with youth leaders and chiefs across the seven villages, which manifests in the coherent nature of security provision in tackling the menace of kidnapping. The trends of kidnapping and responses by the community further positioned the vigilantes as highly relevant stakeholders of security. This subscribes to the argument by Silke (2001:126) that “vigilantism, no matter how controversial, nearly always enjoys a considerable degree of ground-level support.” Their existence in Ovom has been sustained by the support of the king and the entire community.

This study also supports the position of Albert (2003) that crime control vigilantism attempts to promote order outside the law and that, despite its informal, unprofessional and unconstitutional outlook, the security mechanism is an indication that formal security has failed to address the safety needs of people. Such failure has been identified in the routine nature of kidnapping which benefits from the failure of guardians, that is state security providers (security agencies), to act.

This study aligns with the practice in the Igbo land, where vigilantism is rooted in the Igbo tradition of community watch that recognises the role of youth in checkmating the activities of hoodlums (Onyeonoru, 2003). In the case of Ovom, the youth have become significant stakeholders whose efforts in upholding traditional security provisions remain unparalleled due to kinship advantage. The use of vigilantes in Ovom Ama-asaa is within the security arrangement categorised by Albert (2017b) as a communal security regime that focuses on traditional social control mechanisms shared by the community members independent of any external interventions. This study recognises such security arrangement as a reliable measure for taming kidnapping has given the unavailability of state security governance in the form of law enforcement.

Vigilantes have been able to initiate and sustain the implementation of foot patrols in Ovom Ama-asaa community. As noted by Mugari and Thabana (2018), foot patrols are effective in reducing specific crimes. Despite the lack of police visibility, the crime control strategy of hot spot patrols was strategic and helpful in reducing the threat of kidnapping, particularly the invasion model. This pattern of community safety has been able to fill the gap created by the absence of the security forces, thereby creating a scenario described by Mugari and Thabana (2018) as a reassuring presence in security provision. The essence of foot patrol was to ensure that kidnappers would not easily escape and also frustrate their plans of carrying the victims away from places of kidnap to captivity.

So far, no anxiety has been generated by the vigilantes, as there was no accusation of unprofessional conduct and human rights abuse by the vigilante members. A factor responsible for this is the regulation of their activities by the king.

While it is not disputable that the ineffective response of police personnel to crimes motivates vigilantism (Anderson, 2002; Kyei & Berckmoes, 2021), it has been found

that Ovom vigilantism was born out of the non-existence of the footprints of the police.

Although this study agrees with Phillips (2016) that vigilantes are formed to punish criminals, it disagrees with linking local economic inequality to a situation ripe for vigilante organisations, with the assertion that inequality creates demand for vigilantism because poorer citizens feel relatively deprived of security compared with wealthier ones who have advantages regarding private and public security. The vigilantes formed in Ovom Ama-asaa are for both the rich and the poor because kidnappers have targeted even people that are not rich. Most of the rich people in the community are neither patronising private security companies nor engaging the services of state security providers. This explains why the vigilante initiative is for all classes of people.

The foregoing is in tandem with Phillips' (2016:4) assertion that grassroots community groups (instead of patron-funded groups) might be self-funded, or receive donations from their neighbours.

The criteria for membership remain critical to the containment of kidnapping. The vigilante members in Ovom are individuals that are well-known residents of the community and have at no period been implicated in any criminal act. This is to safeguard their integrity for easy identification of criminals who may want to disguise as vigilantes to launch an attack on people by taking them unawares. The argument by some scholars that "vigilante leaders recruit unstable personalities and criminals who do not reflect the public's norms thereby making it difficult for them to get public trust" (Kowalewski, 1991:129) does not apply to the case of Ovom, where members must be known for their good conduct.

Age and profession seldom determine membership criteria across the villages; membership is rather subject to availability. According to the respondents, men below 60 years who are willing to support the community are enlisted as vigilante members, although field investigation revealed that the majority of the members are drawn from the ages of 15 to 50 years. It is a thing of pride for an indigene to be passionate about community safety. This is why the majority of the members are able-bodied men who are guided on how to operate. The risk associated with this anti-kidnapping vigilantism is that members automatically become the enemies of kidnapers.

The study found that the measures for taming kidnapping are both village-based and community-focused, to enhance the safety of residents in the day and at the night. In terms of vigilantism, while the entire community has a youth-based vigilante, not all the villages have vigilantes; Mbaraikoro and Epomiri villages have effective vigilantes that move around their villages at night. As field investigation suggests, the difference between most of the vigilantes and that of Mbaraikoro is secrecy; most people rarely know the operational oversight of the Mbaraikoro vigilante to reduce the risk of being attacked by kidnappers.

One notable significant aspect of anti-kidnapping vigilantism at Mbaraikoro village is that the majority of the youths are not aware of the initiative, as confirmed by the interview and FGD sessions. Most of the elders emphasised the secrecy of the vigilantes, while the youth only mentioned their efforts to monitor criminals. The stakeholders providing direction and protection for the vigilante members are the Palace Council, the Youth Chairman and elders. This is what Weisburd, Davis and Gill (2015) describe as the provision of a sense of safety and security for those inside and outside an organisation; the police-community collaboration would reinforce social controls with appreciable impact on reducing kidnapping hot spots.

## **ii. Palace council's community security review**

The Palace Council meets every Tuesday to review the community security initiatives. Palace Council's Community Security Review (PCCSR) is an initiative by the Palace Council aimed at enhancing the human security efforts of the traditional security providers. This is a communal security regime that can be described as a community-driven security strategy (CDSS). Through the meetings, matters of community safety measures are extensively discussed by Onye Eze (King) and the chiefs who get reports from youth leaders and chairmen of development unions across all the seven villages in the community. This identifies with the argument of Mbuba and Mugambi (2011) that elders and chiefs are relevant stakeholders in community crime prevention and peacebuilding. During the security review, incidents are analysed, threats are reviewed with victims, hot spots are discussed, the lapses in traditional security regimes and possible ways of intervention are identified. The latest developments are presented one

after the other. The reports are recorded by the Palace Secretary. Also, they take advantage of the meeting to identify high-risk areas.

The researcher observed the proceedings on two occasions. One of the significant findings from the meetings is that the leaders are making efforts to sustain the successes recorded by the traditional security providers to ensure that kidnapping is addressed. In addition, the issue of youth empowerment is a source of concern to the extent that the community has repeatedly sent some chiefs to the Abia State Government to present proposals that would attract the government's interest in developing the community. The poor condition of the community secondary school is also one of the demands of the community. The teachers of the secondary school were seen by the researcher at the king's palace when he invited them to discuss the way forward in the interest of the children.

During meetings, the PCCSR reviews the activities of vigilantes to prevent unethical and misconduct behaviours by the members across the 7 villages. This has human rights value, as it checks the observance of human rights while ensuring that the kidnapers renounce their criminality or surrender themselves for arrest. The PCCSR has a committee saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that vigilante members do not become the members of kidnapping gangs they fight against.

A notable benefit of the PCCSR is that it boosts the resilience of residents to the threats of kidnapping. Also, the youths have been able to use the fine option in reducing crime. According to the leader of "Youth ala", "Mbaraikoro youth, the youth do not support evil, we fight anyone that misbehaves. We find those found wanting. The instrument of the fine has been effective in regulating the activities of people, especially between 2013 and 2016 when kidnapping decreased."

The abandonment of secondary school made most young boys have the excuse of not doing anything that would keep them busy. For instance, the metal/woodwork workshops and lubrication pit/mechanic workshops would have created an opportunity for the youths involved in kidnapping to acquire vocational skills. The workshops would have prepared the sons and daughters of the community schooling there to study engineering courses in higher institutions. It would have been relevant to those interested in establishing mechanical workshops without enrolling to study in universities. This shows the lack of youth-focused development, which Nwobueze

(2015) underscores as a basic necessity for peace and stability. The unused workshops now aid the models of kidnapping rather than positively empowering the youths.

### **iii. Handling of runaway kidnappers**

The handling of runaway kidnappers has revealed an aspect of non-violent justice response to those that return after being recognised as kidnappers. But this has some challenges associated with it, as what to do with them becomes an issue. The field investigation revealed that runaway kidnappers were entering the community at night to negotiate peaceful return with some chiefs. The chiefs across the seven villages highlighted the problem of runaway kidnappers returning at night to plead for forgiveness to pave the way for their peaceful return and possible reintegration with the community. They complained that the affected kidnappers did not realise the gravity of their inhuman acts.

According to the chiefs, what to do with this category of repentant kidnappers was a problem. This matter was handled with utmost concern and regard for the safety of the entire population in the community. Consequently, the plea by the kidnappers was not granted as they threatened to apprehend them after washing their hands off the matter. They were informed that their presence could not be welcome.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

### **5.1 Summary**

This study set out to examine the trends of kidnapping in OvomAma-asaa. The incidents of kidnapping in this rural community have been aggravated by the weak presence of security agencies in the area.

Through the field investigation, the researcher was able to connect with the community and this offered the opportunity to exchange ideas thereby deepening understanding of the complexities of neighbourhood security issues. Kidnapping for ransom is a major source of neighbourhood security concern which undermines the efforts of security providers to guarantee the safety need of the populace in affected areas. It has been established that kidnapping to receive ransom is an illicit business by criminal groups who usually capitalise on greed, grievance, deprivation, exclusion, or political factors to perpetuate the human rights abuse to the detriment of vulnerable groups.

Field investigation using the ethnographic method was carried out at the individual and community levels using interviews and FGDs with observations and transect walks. This enabled the researcher to do community mapping in the context of security provision and the threat of kidnapping. A combination of interviews, FGDs, observations, and transect walks enabled the researcher to identify the hotspots of kidnapping in the community and the people at risk of kidnapping for ransom. Trends and patterns revealed that kidnapping affected the level of interaction among residents and their activities which involved movement.

The modus operandi of kidnappers showed how the kidnapping gang structure was formed in a way that gangs that shared similar ideas on the models operated in all the villages. Considering the propensity of humans to perpetrate crime when social control is weak, human security is threatened when there is no police station in a community. This means that people can easily take laws into their hands or intimidate others without being called to order.

The youths in a community where there is no security agency will not have any form of fear and can easily embrace crimes, such as kidnapping, as a routine activity. In other words, the active presence of the police has a crime-reduction value. The



absence of this can aggravate the risk of human safety with the possibility of alternative security providers emerging.

The option of preventive ransom means kidnappers would collect money without necessarily taking their targets away to unknown locations. By implication, the victims in this context simply pay the ransom demanded in the comfort of their homes rather than having to go through the processes of capture, transit and negotiation in captivity. This means that they would escape the six points of death threat usually associated with kidnapping, the moment the option of preventive ransom is embraced.

The strategic significance of the palace council community security review in reducing human rights violations by kidnappers showed how weekly meetings by stakeholders can curb criminality.

Peacefulness in the community consists of protecting people in the seven villages by preventing security threats arising from kidnapping, enhancing the capability of the palace council and the vigilantes who composed the traditional security regime. The peacefulness of the community is not only centred on the efficacy of foot patrols by the vigilantes but the transformation of people from a high priority for preventive ransom and captivity ransom to a protection mindset that discourages the possession of arms to harass innocent residents.

## **5.2 Recommendations:**

- Given that the failure of traditional values can trigger the involvement of people in crime as a routine activity and the violation of inalienable rights, there is the need for communities to revitalise some traditional values. These include hard work, consensus on an effective mechanism to protect humanity at the community level, contentment with what one has, regard for the gods/ancestors, and respect for human dignity to prevent the spatial spread of kidnapping in society. Such values have social control value with an appreciable impact on peace and security.
- This study recommends that stakeholders implement regularly non-formal peace education to change the mindset of the people away from the kidnapping act in the Ovom Ama-Asaa.

- More people-oriented approaches are recommended to eradicate kidnapping. There should also be the inclusion of indigenes in the village-level introduction process to monitor their activities.
- If the only secondary school in the community is not given adequate attention in terms of renovation and environmental sanitations, some kidnapers may be produced from the school. It should have evidence of the academic environment.
- More efforts should be made to unravel kidnapers' hideouts and the people that facilitate their nefarious activities, particularly regarding the provision of arms and other logistics. Based on this, the local population at the community level should be assured of their safety if they give security agencies information on the modus operandi of kidnapers. Specifically, the police and Civil Defence should not surrender the task of maintaining law and order to the vigilantes. They should deploy active intelligence gathering to unravel the sources of arms for kidnapers (whether they patronise local manufacturers or purchase from the security markets outside the community). State sanction is necessary to punish families harbouring kidnapers.
- Security collaboration culture should be mainstreamed into the traditional security provision strategy in the form of engaging different security agencies to curb kidnapping because vigilantes are currently working alone. If the presence of the security forces is felt, kidnapers will be isolated through collaboration and their criminal activity will be made less attractive. When this is achieved, Ovom Ama-asaa will record fewer human rights abuses with attendant improvement in life expectancy, social cohesion and human security. When people are safe, they can have adequate food security.
- To ensure safety, communities should consider initiating community security reviews on weekly basis because of the need to manage crimes at the latent stage. Through this initiative, stakeholders would be able to map the threats to human security and identify options for eradication. It will also allow kings and chiefs to set up committees that would identify individuals and needed actions to facilitate rural development and youth empowerment. This is crucial because of the proclivity of the youth population to engage in criminality. As security is

one of the basic human needs, it is suggested that stakeholders in communities should adopt reactive measures and community security reviews.

- The problem of distance between police and the people should be addressed. The police station in the community should be rebuilt for community-focused security and a more coordinated collaborative partnership between the community and the law enforcement agencies.
- Because kidnapers in the community use motorcycles to operate, it is necessary to make motorcycle owners register their motorcycles at the palace to mitigate the situation.
- The unmonitored spaces that aided kidnapping should be occupied especially uncompleted buildings and other isolated places.
- The community should go beyond all the aforementioned measures to promote the relevance of traditional values of hard work, the dignity of human beings and vocational training to discourage the incidents of kidnapping. The issue of greed should be discouraged by parents and community leaders.
- By doing all these, human rights will be protected and positive peace would be experienced in the community and beyond.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa, Abia State, Nigeria, from 2010 to 2016 had poor social control measures that motivated the act and undermined human development. The crime threatens the safety of people and hinders their social and economic plans in daily life. The study revealed that kidnapping affected different classes of people with grave consequences. These include involuntary/forced eviction, early closure of businesses, reduced social cohesion arising from mutual suspicion. Thus, kidnapping in the community could not be said to be concentrated on highly attractive targets, as ordinary people have also been kidnapped.

The absence of security operatives has not been helpful to the community. This gap in security provision motivated the establishment of vigilantes in the seven villages as a response to the crime of kidnapping. The existing traditional security providers have the backing of the king. His interest in human security led to the initiative called

Palace Council Community Security Review (PCCSR) on weekly basis. The development showed that the community has not been dependent on government intervention in the form of deploying security operatives. Waiting for security agencies may be more costly in an era when kidnapping is a routine activity owing to poor social control.

So far, the vigilantes have been able to muster efforts in reducing the activities of kidnapers who adopted routine and invasion models to target persons at risk without minding the consequences of the act. This aligns with Ettang (2017), who argues that a community-based response mechanism can reduce and prevent crime. But the timely engagement of the stakeholders remains critical.

The fact that kidnapping in Ovom Ama-asaa is characterised by invasion and routine models indicates that it is such a rural-concentrated crime. Some runaway kidnapers returned at night to negotiate their reintegration into the community. This reveals that crime can deny perpetrators their right to indigeneship. Some of them preferred to return to negotiate reintegration without discrimination because they believe that there is no place like home and that the curse placed on kidnapers would affect them in future. It was difficult for some chiefs to pardon this group of people, as they are seen as a bad influence, having wasted the opportunity earlier given to them to renounce this crime. This made the chiefs establish contacts with the soldiers that in other parts of Abia State to pick such persons.

The PCCSR can be likened to a joint problem-solving approach of conflict management because all stakeholders in the community are involved and they use the opportunity to call on their children involved in kidnapping to renounce their criminal activities. The fact that no anxiety has been generated by the vigilantes shows that they are still a force to reckon with in reducing the problem of kidnapping.

How the community has been able to keep kidnapers at bay, notwithstanding the strategies kidnapers adopted, helped in making their preventive measures effective. The traditional security providers require close collaboration with the security agencies, especially the police, to sustain the success already recorded in preventing the formation of more groups. The assertion by some youths that they “don’t support evil, and fight anyone that misbehaves, fine those found wanting” is in tandem with the findings by Nwobueze (2015), who asserts that “youth-focused human development”

can engage young people and make it difficult for them to be involved in crime. This means that, if Ovom youths are engaged properly through education and skills acquisition, they cannot easily become kidnappers.

The issue of kidnapping in Ovom is important beyond the immediate geographical focus, as the study offers conflict experts an opportunity to comprehend the themes that characterise the models of kidnapping in a rural community. The cases of would-be victims paying preventive ransom to the kidnappers to avoid and prevent the stress and risks of being kidnapped show the sophistication of the crime in the community. This implies that kidnapping thrives in an environment with poor social control measures and a lack of youth-centred human development.

Although the routine model helped many kidnappers take away their targets without immediate knowledge by the people, the invasion model has been deadlier and more injurious to the people of Ovom. The selection of the members of anti-kidnapping vigilantes based on their good behaviour, without any criminal record, enhances the credibility of the groups. This contradicts the view that men of questionable character are sometimes recruited as vigilante members.

Since kidnappers are neither omnipotent nor invisible, taming the crime of kidnapping demands urgent state sanction and security-sector reforms beyond anti-kidnapping laws, like the death penalty option, for eradication. Security agencies must be equipped to meet the demands of the current dynamic situation of insecurity. Crime detection technology gadgets should be used to track and identify the hot spots used by the kidnappers. When apprehended, such kidnappers must be made to account for the lives wasted and their abuse of human dignity.

Further studies could investigate the patterns of kidnapping in communities that have the adequate presence of the police to enhance understanding of why there is no alternative security in the form of traditional security provisioning. They could also investigate the use of hybrid security arrangements to counter the menace of kidnapping in communities. The efficacy of oath-taking in countering kidnapping in a rural community could also be examined.

#### **5.4 Contributions to knowledge**

The thesis has revealed that the act of kidnapping is risky not because of a lack of the resources to pay the ransom but also when one is vocal or has information about offenders. Some were forced to run away for safety because the kidnappers suspected they knew the patterns of their operation.

The absence of state security forces allowed traditional security providers to oversee safety with the backing of the king and Council of Chiefs. Such a people-oriented community security regime became the hope of the people. It reduced forced eviction and enhanced understanding of rural community perspective of the trends, causes, patterns and consequences of kidnapping and how preventing the menace promoted human rights protection.

Key contributions were made by the study. Unlike several works that focus on payment of ransom when in captivity or insurance in the event of a kidnapping, this study drew attention to how people also pay preventive ransom to offenders to avoid being taken away into captivity when the rate of ransom could become high. Secondly, this thesis revealed that poor monitoring of places and inadequate vocational training motivate criminally-minded gangs that do not focus on highly attractive targets and can target any group of persons. Third, the study has offered insight into the patterns and consequences of rural community perspective of kidnapping, which shows how people-centred community security initiatives provide alternative security during uncertainty. The findings depart from the usual state security and religious movements' points of view that emphasise the effectiveness of the criminal justice system, political responses, socio-economic policies and changes in people's attitudes to curb kidnapping. This is based on the effectiveness of the community-driven security strategy sustained by the Palace Council through consistent support for village-based anti-kidnapping measures that reduced incidents and curbed the loss of monetary value, sources of livelihood and property to kidnappers.

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**Appendices: Field research pictures**

Plate 1: Ovom Primary School was used by kidnapers to plan and attack the targets.



Source: Fieldwork, September 24, 2017

Plate 2: Metal/woodwork workshop abandoned at the Secondary School Ovom Amasaa



Source: Fieldwork, 2017.

Plate 3: The pictures reveal that none of the metal workshop and lubrication pit is still working neither do students use them nor have any instructors to guide them. This is the bane of what the workshop would have translated to in terms of youth empowerment. This would have contributed to the reduction of kidnapping.



Source: Fieldwork, 2017.

Plate 4: The football field of the secondary school in the community



Source: Fieldwork, 2017.

**Plate 5: The primary school in Ovom**



Source: Fieldwork, 2017-2018