



Vigilantism, Youth Culture, And Governance Seventy Years of Ghana's Political Scape

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Abstract

In the modern era, there is growing worry over youth vigilantism. This is especially true for religious organizations, football, advocacy, and governance. Youth energies should be properly channeled or harnessed for positive, productive goals, as advocated globally. This article aimed to examine the main factors contributing to the detrimental effects of juvenile vigilantism and the role that the government has played in these historical events. Mixed techniques were employed in the study, guided by the political vigilantism theory. With the help of stratified and purposive sampling procedures, four important informants in the Bolgatanga Municipality were interviewed for the report, completing a triangulation process. The research discovered that, in one way or another, instability, unemployment or idleness, police corruption, illiteracy, bad police-community relations, and ineffective policing had

Keywords: *Governance, Youth Culture, Vigilantism, Political Land Scope.*

Introduction

The subject of youth vigilantism is gaining currency in contemporary times. This can be mainly found in religious groupings, sports (football), advocacy issues, and governance. The proper channeling of youth energies or harnessing them for constructive, productive purposes has been championed worldwide. The recent ramifications and manifestations of the abuse of youth energies in governance are under-researched in Ghana. There is a general perception that violence resulting from youth vigilantism has been on the ascendancy in recent times.

According to the World Youth Report (2003), the UN definition of youth is 15 to 24 years, while the Commonwealth definition stands at 15 to 29 years; the African Union adopts a broader definition of 15 to 35 years. But for many scholars, youth is better defined as that period of transition from dependence (childhood) to independence (adulthood), the nature and length of which varies from one individual or society to another (Curtain, 2003). The transition definition of youth has also been



proposed. Rather than defining youth based on age groups, within this definition, youth can be understood as a socially constructed category defined by societal expectations and responsibilities (Honwana & De Boeck, 2005). For this study, the term 'youth' is framed around the African Union definition: people aged between 15 and 35 years old. However, the term 'youth' will include people who may not meet the African Union definition but are regarded as youth in their respective societies and contexts. For the purposes of this study, elders are therefore defined as people older than 35 years old or generally regarded as elders in their respective societies and contexts.

According to Graham et al. (2003), governance is seen as an interaction among structures, processes, and traditions that determine how power and responsibilities are exercised, how decisions are taken, and how citizens and other stakeholders have their say. Therefore, governance is about power, relationship, and accountability: it addresses questions like who has the influence, who makes the decisions, and how decision-makers are held accountable. Halfani et al. (1994) highlight governance as a system of government concentrating on effective and accountable institutions, democratic principles and electoral process, representation, and responsible structures of government to ensure an open and legitimate relationship between civil society and the state. They emphasized the relationship between civil society and the state, which is very crucial. This is, in fact, an important notion since this differentiates the study of governance from the study of government.

The Research Problem

All over the world, governance is about providing its citizens with their needs and satisfying them. Every country's youth should be concerned and contribute to protecting and making good use of governance structures and systems. While vigilantism, for that matter, demands citizens' rights and justice from the government and duty bearers, the current situation is different in Ghana.

Several people have died at the hands of self-appointed crime fighters, and many others have been injured. Vigilante organizations and groups continue their criminal actions while the official crime-fighting agencies appear helpless" Sekhonyane (2003). Incidents of vigilantism have become a familiar scene in many townships and informal settlements in South Africa. Statistics from the Independent Complaints Directorate indicated that 71 people were killed in vigilante attacks in 2005, doubling the number of incidents in 2001. Four hospitals in Gauteng and Pretoria indicated that, during 2006, there was a marked increase in the number of suspected vigilante trauma cases they had treated Maughan et al., (2006). As indicated, acts of vigilantism have become a regular occurrence in post-1994 Ghana and will be studied here as a case study under the umbrella term "people's courts." (Sekhonyane, 2003).

In contemporary times, vigilantism is observed worldwide. (Harnischfeger, 2003; Minnaar, 2001), investigated "necklacing" in South Africa and Nigeria, where old car tires were put around the necks of victims and set ablaze for either political reasons, allegations of stealing, witchcraft, or other



immoral acts. Executions were carried out in the marketplace and on the street, with no statistics showing the total number of persons killed (Harnischfeger and Minnaar, 2003).

Problem Statement

Despite the significant role of youth in vigilantism culture is shaping the attitudes and behaviours, there is a limited understanding of the specific ways in which youth culture and vigilantism intersects with governance in Ghana and the prime causes of the negative images of youth in vigilantism, and how has governance been part of these historical developments.

Research Question

What accounts for the prime causes of the negative images of youth vigilantism, and how has governance been part of these historical developments?

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the prime causes of the negative images of youth vigilantism and how governance has been part of these historical developments.

The significance of the study

The study will consider what accounts for the prime causes of the negative images of youth vigilantism and how governance has been part of these historical developments. Furthermore, it is to contribute to scholarly research on how vigilantism and youth group activities can be managed to develop good governance.

Literature Review

A broader source of literature issues comprises the state of the current thinking of the youth, governance, the Concept of vigilantism, causes of vigilantism, Effects of vigilantism, and Trends of vigilante groups. From the perspective of the point of reference, the management of vigilantism and good governance.

There are several extant works on the youth in Africa and Ghana. Scholars are unanimous about the vibrant and active nature of the youth in the political process, even though they fail to discuss the factors that make the youth active in the political process. Accordingly, (Knebel, 1937; Rivta, 1975), the youth are active agents in the social and political processes and have, therefore, called for greater responsibilities to be entrusted to them. However, these scholars have not looked at what makes the youth active in the political process. Some African scholars (Diouf, 2003; Burgers, 2003) have pointed out the negative perceptions about the youth. They see the youth as a threat to society, irresponsible people, and a means through which leaders climb to power.

Generally, the youth in Africa have been labeled as a 'lost generation', especially in Liberia and Sierra Leone, where civil wars have led to massive population displacement, a social upheaval described as a crisis of the youth, and in South Africa, where the 'political' youth generation of the 1980s has had to come to terms with unemployment and social marginalization in the 1990s. Thus, since the late 1980s and early 1990s, terms like the 'the lost generation, and 'marginalized youth' have gained



currency (Ntsebeza, 1993) in West Africa, for instance, though the youth constitutes 60-65 percent of the population, they are bedeviled by apathy, disenchantment, disempowerment and exploitation (Konteh, 2007). These scholars nevertheless recognize the contribution of the youth in providing support base to political leaders who seek to capture political power. But they have been silent about what motivates the youth to be active and to provide support for political leaders.

Youth Development

Youth development has been defined in many ways depending on its context and ideological underpinning. Youth development is viewed as a conscious effort to coordinate, develop, and support positive activities that promote young people's social, emotional, physical, cultural, moral, and academic well-being (Kwame, 2019). This definition describes youth development as a process that involves the state, communities, families, schools, religious organizations, and the private sector in determined efforts to improve the quality of life of our youth. Again, it recognizes that young people cannot improve their quality of life alone. However, through education institutions, media, government, and communities, young people can be supported to acquire the values and competencies they need to succeed in life (Kwame, 2019).

Youth Development Strategies in Ghana

The present generation of Ghanaian youth faces many more difficult challenges in their development into adults than ever, from participation in political violence, armed robbery, and drug and alcohol abuse to a lack of employment in an unforgiving economy. Factors affecting the quality of life of our youth and their ability to reach their full potential are now multifaceted and more challenging than in the past. The structural adjustment programs introduced in the last two decades have significantly altered the structure of our economy. Service sector employment, which has increased over the years, has compelled a massive influx of youth from rural areas into towns and cities in search of non-existing jobs Asiamah (2006). Rural-urban migration has also significantly changed the traditional kinship structure that provided nurturance, safe places, and mentors that young people need to be socially, emotionally, ethically, physically, and academically competent. With the breakdown of the traditional family structure or the inability of the traditional family system to act as the agent for the transmission and renewal of sociocultural values, it is imperative to design youth development programs and education system that compensate for the erosion of our traditional youth development systems (Kwame, 2016; Asiamah, 2017).

This paper focuses on shifting the headlines in Ghana from youth vigilantism to youth development. Additionally, this research argues that while possession of skills measured by pen and paper tests and the ability to solve intellectual puzzles are rewarding, academic skills alone are not enough acquisition of a full range of competencies such as civic, vocational, emotional, cultural, physical, ethical and social competencies are instrumental for our youth to become independent and productive citizens. This research calls for a new renewal of efforts to develop youth programs to complement the formal education system to enrich the content and the context of learning for our



young people. Focusing on academic skills alone as our educational system does, skews resources in one developmental domain. This denies our young people the comprehensive tools and skills they need to develop into productive and disciplined adults (Kwame, 2018; Bob-Millar, 2020).

Youth and Governance

The normative framework for youth governance in Africa includes, among others African Youth Charter (2006), the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance ACDEG, (2007), the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (1981) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990). These frameworks spell out rights, freedoms, and duties that accrue to young people and provide guidance on effectively and meaningfully promoting their potential at all levels. Several African countries have adopted national youth policies and established national structures such as national youth councils and ministries and agencies dedicated to youth issues. Also, several countries and political parties have established special youth quotas to deliberately guarantee participation in political processes, for instance, in Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda (Africa Youth Charter, 2006).

Youth Political Hooliganism and Vigilantism

The most worrying development is the initiation of the youth into the act of diverting their energies from development-oriented activities to acts of violence and destruction with serious consequences for their future. Implementing the Vigilantism Act, Act 999 has even made the penalties more daring, but how many of our youth are aware of this act and its content? Answers to these questions are important but will not interest the political elite, who are the direct beneficiaries of these acts. Worldwide, the youth have remained central in every facet of national development and policy direction determination. Parents and guardians must step up their responsibilities towards educating their young children on the effects of political hooliganism and vigilantism in the light of the law and their personal development. They must lead by example and eschew any form of hooliganism or vigilantism. The youth should stand against any political party or candidate who wants to rely on this to ascend the political ladder (Sinto, 2020).

Despite these success stories, several critics of the youth participation discourse continue to note that these initiatives have not adequately deepened nor enhanced young people's participation in political and governance processes (2017). For instance, young people are underrepresented in formal public offices and political spaces, often leading to sidelining of their concerns and realities. Invariably, they are more involved in ad-hoc engagements or mobilization, which are often the informal avenues for them to express their displeasure about politics and governance. These include demonstrations and strikes, initiating or signing a petition, joining pressure groups, volunteering time and donating to a cause or charity, boycotting a product, spreading and voting in social media surveys, etc. four public administration reform eras referred to above are explained in detail hereunder (Moncada, 2017).



Concept of Vigilantism

Researchers tend to omit the specific root concept and instead rely on context-specific definitions. This limits our ability to gauge how distinct conceptualizations may vary from a generally accepted understanding of the concept within a particular 'language domain,' defined as a substantive field of study, period, location, or scholarly discipline. It is thus vital to establish a root definition that can serve as a conceptual anchor. The research offers a particular root concept that reflects careful engagement with the broad existing literature on vigilantism that spans empirical contexts, periods, and scholarly disciplines. The research defines vigilantism as the collective use or threat of extra-legal violence in response to an alleged criminal act. The social organization aligns with much extant research that views vigilantism primarily as a group activity.

The target is an individual(s) who has allegedly committed a criminal act as defined by the state, defined as 'an illegal act for which someone can be punished by the government (Eduardo & Moncada, 2019). The repertoire of violence is the extra-legal use or threat of violence, which can be lethal or non-lethal. The justification is the alleged violation of the rule of law. Motivation in this root concept is conceptually aligned with the justification – punishment of the violation of the rule of law but may diverge to other motivating factors depending on the conceptual strategy used by the researcher (Global Crime, 2017).

Causes of Vigilantism

Inadequate job opportunities have resulted in the formation of vigilante groups. Most of the youth in Ghana are redundant. They view politics as an easier way to get a job and enrich themselves. According to many statistics conducted worldwide, the lack of job opportunities among the youth exacerbates the violence in the country. There are increased social vices, such as armed robbery, prostitution, and fraud, among others, due to inadequate job opportunities in Ghana. Hence, this has led the youth to form vigilante groups that support parties with the intent of gaining job appointments after their political parties win the elections. Politics in Ghana is viewed as a means of job employment and wealth amassment (Petrus & Bob Millar, 2009).

Effects of Vigilantism

The 19th and 20th-century incidences of lynching caused much trauma amongst black people in the US, with little opposition from state and federal officials. Akin to race-based terrorism, these "terror lynchings" reached extreme proportions between 1880 and 1940, causing great fear and humiliation within African-American communities. The net effect of the terror lynching was "mass migration by millions of blacks from the South into urban ghettos in the North and West throughout the first half of the twentieth century" and the creation of a culture of racial subordination and segregation for several decades (Equal Justice Initiative, 2015). (Hamber & Lewis, 1997) indicate that the mob way of dispensing justice seems quicker and more effective and restores people's faith in the justice system. Vigilantism, however, has implications, most of which are usually negative. (Baloyi, 2015) argues that children and some adults who watch these kinds of gruesome killings are exposed to



blood and death and the violence portrayed during the lynching. Consequently, such impressionable ideas are picked by children and adults who witness these violent acts. They might think vigilantism is the right way of dispensing justice in society, thereby perpetrating it themselves. The net effect of this is the inculcation of a lack of respect for human life and dignity into the next generation of citizens, who will have no qualms about dragging suspected criminals through the streets, beating them, and finally burning them to death (Hamber, 1997; Baloyi, 2015).

Hooliganism in Vigilantism

Our ancestors had lived peacefully without political parties. The upsurge of political hooliganism in Ghana must be a source of consternation. Is it not pernicious to our democratic accolades? Hooliganism not only threatens our beloved country's security but is equally inimical to democracy and the rule of law. Perhaps a well-touted pithy statement like; "Ghana is a beacon of African democracy" is increasingly becoming a funny epigram if not an aphorism. We pride ourselves on such a slogan without making frantic efforts to transpose it into reflecting the salient features of democracy.

Treads of Vigilante Groupings in Ghana

Ghana's democracy runs on a majoritarian electoral system that grants sweeping powers to executive presidents. Its focus is on effective government and thus ensures presidents have enormous state powers to execute their elected mandate (Cranenburgh, 2011). This incipiently encourages elites to resort to vigilantes to help them capture and monopolize the exercise of state powers. Vigilantes are patronized to help political parties gain undue advantage in electoral matters. The patronage of vigilantes is largely associated with the two main parties, NDC and NPP, which have been dominant and have shown potential to win every election since the inception of the Fourth Republic in 1992. Vigilante incidents usually arise in such a way that pre-vote events can be used to predict and explain vote-day violence while both combine to give meaning to onsets of post-vote events. The figure below highlights how these violent events are usually linked. Intemperate languages in pre-vote canvassing foster partisan animosities that set society up for violence on vote day. Left unaddressed, they foment a sense of preparedness for revenge. Notable recent examples include the all-die-be-die2 (GhanaWeb.Com, 2011) and boot-for-boot3 (GhanaWeb.Com, 2019) commentaries that aimed to spur co-partisans to confront intimidations orchestrated by out-partisans. Presidential candidates used these intemperate idioms in direct response to electoral violence allegedly orchestrated by vigilantes affiliated with governing parties. These commentaries can impose extreme fear and panic on the electorate and encourage low voter turnout in constituencies with one-party dominance. This vacuum enables vigilantes to engage in ballot fraud, including stuffing ballot boxes with ghosts, underage votes, and over-count votes for patrons.

The pre-meditated agenda of forceful eviction of (previous) political appointees and public workers is to create vacancies for fresh partisan appointments, while intimidation of regional and district chief executives helps to weaken regional and district police leadership and leads to a heightened



sense of insecurity in society. This strategically causes public uproar that compels governing parties to fulfill pre-vote pledges made to vigilantes. Eviction of incumbent appointees particularly signals to ruling elites that they cannot enjoy the privileges of exercising state powers while overlooking the plight of vigilantes whose sacrifices somehow won them political power.

Vigilantism has thus been widely loathed and resented as despicable, including political elites as major beneficiaries of vigilante politics. An Afro barometer survey involving 2,400 nationwide representative samples showed that 88% of Ghanaians considered political vigilantism wrong and punishable, while 87% and 91% disapproved of locking up public offices and causing destruction to public properties, respectively (CDD-Ghana, 2018). Such nationwide loathing is precise because political vigilantism has undermined election integrity and risked the country's fairly peerless political stability with large-scale political violence over the years. The involvement of lethal weapons resulting in fatalities has moreover peaked more recently, especially in the aftermath of the 2016 polls (Myjoyonline.com, 2019). Vigilantes now have resolved to use brute violence against even 'their own when they have felt entitled to do so (Bjarnesen, 2020).

Supporters of feuding executives of the New Patriotic Party in the Karaga constituency clashed Tuesday night vandalizing party installation, an alleged military van and invading a police station in a spread of violence that continues to rock the Northern region" (ghanaweb.com, 2017). Ghana cannot be a beacon of African democracy without recourse to the rule of law. Whoever advised President Rawlings on this might have learned his/her economics at Sunday school! Is it not quixotic for a national government to ask members of GPRTU to collect tax from their members for the state? They can never be accountable. That was unacceptable! This is similar to the Ghana police waiting for politicians to give them go-ahead before arresting party foot soldiers engaging in hoodlum. Martin (2018) asked about the purpose of a political party. An attempt to answer the question that political parties seek control over the country's government through a legal manner of winning a political election party in the world will destroy its grass-root support base to please others. As Napoleon Bonaparte observed: "Stupidity is never a handicap in politics." It will be a bootless errand to trust politicians to enforce law and order, especially when the law affects their members. During the American Revolution, one British army man remarked: "Here pity interposes for we cannot forget that when we strike, we wound our blood. This was because many Americans, the British soldiers, were fighting and migrated from England. Can political party leaders wound their blood? For fear of committing political suicide and demonstrating the burden of gratitude, governing parties cannot be harsh on their foot soldiers who had contributed to the ruling party's electoral fortunes. I believe strengthening the security agencies and best media practices could help nip political party vandalism in the bud (Africa Journal, 2015).

Ghana's police hierarchy must be free from political influence. No police head, Inspector-General of Police (IGP), must be retired or be changed with a change of government. When grassroots party supporters observe that the IGP is loyal to their political party, it could weaken law enforcement.



They say familiarity breeds contempt, and police political party acquaintance is no exception. This means that the appointment of IGP must base on merit, not covert political susurrus and manoeuvring. Ghana leaders who are supposed to be standard bearers of the rule of law surprisingly bend the law for political expediency. For example, the retirement age of IGP is black and white in our legal books. I am curious to know why any president would extend the retirement age of the IGP (Kwame, 2017). Such practices make the IGP a toothless bulldog within a ruling party but detrimental to civil servants, political neutrality, and anonymity. If any president wants the service of a retiring IGP, it must be a different position, such as a security advisor, a plenipotentiary, or any other post. Extending the retirement period of IGP is unfair to other civil servants (Media Commission, 2018).

Theoretical Framework

The Theory of Political Vigilantism underpins the study. One theory of political vigilantism is based specifically on John Locke's classic social contract theory. Locke claims that, in the state of nature, individuals have the right to pursue justice, having equivalent "executive power" to punish crimes against the laws of nature. Thus using instruments of national power to punish crime. In an attempt to perpetuate their rule, some civil governments may use vigilante groups as a form of oppression. The Political Theory has been applied with approval in removing some civil governments, particularly in West African countries, where the powerful have often turned to vigilante groups as a means to ascend to power (Steve, 2017).

Anomie Vigilante Theory "Abrupt transitions" are social exigencies of revolution, war, and economic recession leading to unparalleled social vices such as theft, assault, arson, and social change that affect confidence in the stability of existing social norms and therefore produce a disparity between value expectations and value capabilities and under conditions of Anomie, individuals experience psychological dissatisfaction. With philosophical, economic, psychological, and sociological treatments of norm-violating acts and social disorder, people can easily resort to vigilante activities to express their frustrations on perceived life challenges. Vigilante activity becomes a crisis phenomenon that encompasses perceived social dysfunctions brought about by norm-violating exigencies that, as public wrongs, produce a psychological reaction throughout society that requires rectification.

Methodology

The Research Approach

This study used a Stata survey research design to find the root causes of vigilantism in youth groups in Bolgtanga Municipality. That is because the study and population were large. Its scope is very vast. It describes and interprets what exists at present. Surveys are concerned with conditions or relationships that exist, practices that prevail, beliefs, points of view or attitudes that are held, processes that are going on, influences that are being felt, and trends that are developing. The purposes and uses of survey methods of research: although the major purpose of survey methods in



research is to describe the problem or phenomenon, many surveys go beyond mere descriptions of the existing situation. Surveys design also serve as direct sources of valuable knowledge concerning human behavior (Babbie, 2013).

The survey methods were used to collect the following types of information (i) what exists, (ii) what we want, and (iii) how to get there. The information will be gathered by studying and analysing important aspects of the present situation. The information about what we want will be obtained by clarifying goals and objectives, possibly through a study of existing conditions or what experts consider desirable. The information on how to get these are collected by discovering the possible means of achieving the goals based on the experiences of others or of opinions of experts. Kothari (2004) view this approach as conditions or relationship that exists, opinions that are held, processes that are going on, and evident effects or trends that are developing.

Sample Selection and Sample Size

All items in any field of inquiry constitute a 'Universe' or 'Population' (Kothari 2004). He also opined that a complete enumeration of all items in the 'population' is known as a census inquiry. Millar (1991) agrees that there is a need to select a few items from a large population for study purposes. This is to enable one to make inferences and to be able to generalize. The representation sampling approach will be used for the sampling and sample size, as agreed by Millar (1991). He also agrees that representation sampling is better than a large sample size or a whole population. The size of a sample should not be too large or too small (Karma 2008).

Sample Size

This study is a mixed method based on both primary and secondary data research; it reviews the literature on the causes of youth vigilantism; the report was done and triangulated with an interview of 4 key informants in the Bolgatanga Municipality aided by The two forms of sampling used in this study were stratified sampling and purposive sampling technique. The interview questions and the desk findings served as the basis for the data analysis. Purposive sampling was used to select participants. Including all the youth groups in the municipality at their base call parliament, both NDC and NPP members were sampled, as some past DCEs and Members of Parliament in the Municipality, Ghana Police Service, to ascertain the activities of these youth groups.

A convenient sampling technique was used to select the respondents from the rest of the youth. It is preferred because they are mature and understand issues, access, and proximity for the study and the researcher was also preferred for its fast data collection approach.

Not all the youth groups were selected for the study, but largely the NPP and NDC youth groups at their various parliament were purposively sampled and used for the study. This sampling technique was used because these youth groups are the target youths used to cause mayhem by NPP and NDC. These youth groups are also constructed by the political parties and funded by the parties. They

understand the dynamics of the situations can read properly, and would be able to answer the questionnaire.

Discussion of Findings

This study has established that several reasons are advanced for the causes of vigilante groups in Bolgatanga Municipality.

Table 1. Causes of Vigilantism in Upper East Upper Region

Causes	Freq	Percent
Poor Education System	21	10.5
Quest For Political Power	25	12.5
Drug Trade	20	10.5
Poor Enforcement of Laws	21	10.5
Unemployment	24	12.0
Retaliation	23	11.5
Absence of Trust in the Security System	22	11.0
Protection of Votes	22	11.0
Corruption	22	11.0
Total	200	100

Source: Field Data, (2023)

According to the respondents, the greatest cause of vigilantism in Bolgatanga is the quest for political power (12.5 %). The other causes are as follows; unemployment (12 %), retaliation (11.5 %), absence of trust in the security system (11 %), protection of votes (11 %), corruption (11 %), poor educational system (10.5 %), poor enforcement of laws (10.5 %) and the drug trade (10 %). The findings from the study of Straus and Taylor (2012) confirm the results found in this study.

They also claimed that youth activities are primarily the result of political party incumbents manipulating the electoral procedure to maintain power. This means that the mechanisms that help to explain the occurrence of contentious politics within a party are linked to changes in political opportunities. Oduro (2012) also asserted that electoral violence is largely due to the reluctance of the security services to investigate and prosecute crimes caused by vigilantism. This has caused



unresolved chaos and confusion, resulting in mistrust in the security systems. Some authors cite illiteracy and unemployment as key causes of vigilantism (Agbiboa, 2018; Musa et al., 2017).

Insecurity is the main reason for the conception of Vigilantism in Soe, a sub-urban area in Bolga Municipality. There is a delayed response from traditional security agencies in security situations. Focus group discussion was conducted with about 60 youth groups drawn from the NPP and NDC and other youth groups with their own parliament. Key informant interviews with the Ghana Police Service, a local NGO, and two retired MPs from Paga and Bawku were also conducted to validate the findings and enrich the discussion. Being in the Soe area of Bolgatanga Municipality faces a raft of insecurity, forming the genesis of vigilantism. The findings agree with Chukwuma (2001), who established that police have challenges in protecting the lives and property of members of the society, which has given rise to an effort by the community to ensure their security.

According to Okoro (2007), corruption, brutality, high level of extortion, oppressive and repressive postures, high cost of assessment to services of police, non-personal relationships, and poverty are some of the reasons that made people lose faith in the police and their consequent preference for informal policing structures. At the same time, there may not be a cordial and mutual relationship between the Anambra vigilante service group and the formal policing structure. Feeling by the police that the informal policing structure is not legally recognized and that they are assuming their constitutional powers to themselves may include the reasons for this. Another reason may be that the police are benefiting from the high unabated crime rate in the country (Amuka, 2008).

According to Shaw (2002), crime is rising because of the apparent inadequacies of the police in society to provide safety and security to citizens. Crime is on the rise, and the police are not coping very well with the citizen demand for protection in countries undergoing dramatic economic and political transformation Adegbusi (2009), conducted a study on vigilante groups and the task of policing in the Ondo state of Nigeria with 500 respondents and found that vigilante groups are important in crime prevention and control as majority of respondents specified that vigilantes can partner with the police to prevent and control crime in the state. It was found that vigilante groups participate in numerous positive activities, such as providing security through patrols, deterring criminals, and apprehending criminals, among others, while others are negative such as extortion, colluding with criminals, and not following the rule of law in their operations. The study found that security has improved in the Bolgatanga Municipality due to vigilante group operations targeting criminals. Again, vigilantism and its related crimes have been reduced in Bolgatanga municipality because of the youth empowerment agencies (YEA) programs such as Youth in Policing, youth in Afforestation, and Nation Builder Core (NABCO) program introduced by the government of Ghana for graduates that have helped in keeping the youth out of crime. Security improvement in the Soe area has assured the thriving of businesses and created an enabling environment ensuring people engage in income-generating activities without fear.



Vigilantism has most positively affected the management of security in Bolgatanga Municipality. The study established that several strategies can be set up to improve the effectiveness of vigilante group activities in crime management. These include Continuous practical support and financing needs to be provided to the groups to increase members' knowledge on prevention of crime, awareness creation and providing information to members of the public regarding the responsibilities of vigilante groups, creating laws to establish and be familiar with vigilante groups existing in the communities and having them register formally and incorporate them into community policing. These strategies will ensure the effectiveness of vigilante groups in crime management and that security stakeholders complement each other, thereby leading to better security in the Bolgatanga Municipality.

Key Informants;

The interaction with key informants found the following;

- (i) *Theft, robberies, and politically related crimes are some of the crimes considered to be committed by vigilante youth groups.*
- (ii) *Cyber-related crimes are also common with vigilantism.*
- (iii) *"We sit in this shed most of the time because we do not have jobs. So my chairman or any big man comes to tell me to help him in exchange for some money, I will help" (Woo3. 23/09/2022. Field Interview, Bolga).*

Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made:

The greatest cause of vigilantism in Ghana is the quest for political power, joblessness, and inadequate community policing. The study found that insecurity is the main reason for the causes of vigilante groups in Bolgatanga Municipality, in the upper east region. Other reasons include unemployment and the idleness of the youths.

Recommendation

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- (i) It is recommended that the government and other stakeholders should develop youth empowerment programs to reduce the high unemployment rate and idleness leading to crime.
- (ii) The government should regulate Vigilante group activities to ensure that vigilantes can supplement the police to engage in positive activities that contribute to crime management to reduce the negative activities that run contrary to a security problem.

A further recommendation was that Strategies be implemented to support vigilante groups' in crime management. This includes strengthening community policing by incorporating vigilantes to ensure better crime management at the community level, providing training and incentives, and engaging



with vigilante groups on human rights issues to ensure that they observe human rights in their operations.

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