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Jungle justice in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria

Ayomide Ilori

Department of Sociology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.

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Jungle justice has added another dimension to the neighbourhood insecurity challenge in Lagos metropolis. The reoccurring lynching of suspect(s) in a crime scene, in Lagos metropolis and Nigeria, as well as, the dearth of empirical studies on this heinous crime in Nigeria motivated this study. Thus, this study anchored on Social Disorganisation Theory (SDT) of the Chicago School of Criminology, which identified neighborhood crime and delinquency, emphasizing spatial patterns of behaviours. In-depth interview was employed to uncover the factors, patterns of occurrence, and the security implication of Jungle justice in Lagos metropolis. Purposive sampling technique was utilised to get a sample size of thirty respondents for this study. Content analysis was used to analyze the transcribed data and results showed that jungle justice happens as a result of incessant neighbourhood crimes and insecurities with lack of public and institutional trust in the Nigeria Police Force in the prosecution of a crime suspect. To avert jungle justice in Lagos metropolis, there must be a concerted effort by the public and the Nigeria Police Force to preempt the future occurrence of such crime.

Key words: Jungle justice, crime, insecurity, Lagos.

INTRODUCTION

The ever-present human relationships in a particular community where daily needs are met constitute an avenue for the dramatization of crime. Oftentimes, those caught in the act or mistaken for perpetrators of crimes committed, do get lynched, maimed or eventually killed if there is no quick effort to salvage such act by security operatives, that is, law enforcement agents or civil authorities. According to Uzundu (2011), the incidents of crimes and neighbourhood insecurity have culminated in countless alarms and events of mob actions “jungle justice” against nabbed suspects. Peter (2014) and Amara (2015) separately noted that jungle justice or mob justice has become a form of public extrajudicial killings in sub-Saharan Africa, where an alleged criminal is humiliated, beaten or summarily executed by a crowd (mob), or vigilantes. This form of street justice according

to Samah (2006) occurs where a dysfunctional and corrupt judiciary system and law enforcement have lost all credibility.

The practice of mob justice continues to attract a lot of attention globally. Citizens of countries have resulted in jungle justice when denied swift response of the security operatives to save people from crimes like threats, loss of life and properties, maim, kidnapping, insurgency, arson, and lots more. This has become a major security problem in most developing countries. Mob justice is extensive and all-encompassing in cities and town areas (Attafuah, 2008). In African communities, there are ethnic vigilantes and scarcely does a day goes by without news on gruesome scenes of mob justice. There are notable examples in Nigeria, jungle justice include the activities of the O’odua People’s Congress Yoruba vigilante/social

E-mail: ayoilori01@gmail.com.

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group in South West Nigeria, the Bakassi Boys in the South East of Nigeria and the Hisbah Vigilante Group and other type of ethnic and neighbourhood vigilante groups in Nigeria.

In Nigeria, events of mob action or jungle justice have shown that the police institution and the legal systems do not enjoy legitimacy from the masses. There are strong indicators of relative socio-economic inequality while assessing justice and public trust in the police tends to be problematic (Reisig et al., 2004). Therefore, in the wake of any security threats, the least chance people get, people prefer to harm or lynch the suspected person or persons without due recourse for states security operatives to take charge. Although this is a direct violation of human rights by taking illegal actions against even a suspected criminal, without following the due process, the inadequacies in the swift response of Nigeria security service men, especially the Nigeria Police when called upon to rescue a crime scene has put into the public hands the legitimacy of community informal policing of their environs which often times leads to jungle justice.

As such, the institutional trustworthiness of the Nigeria Police Force saddled with protection of life and properties have failed to be consciously developed, maintained, and preserved. There is a lack of public trust in the Nigerian security units and servicemen and this has made neighbourhoods in Nigeria to accommodate mob action or jungle justice in times of security threat.

Reports on jungle justice in Nigerian states, Vladimir (2012) noted that in 2012, a necklace lynching involved four young men regarded as Aluu 4; Ugonna Obuzor, Toku Lloyd, Chiadika Biringa, and Tekena Elkanah, all students of the University of Port Harcourt. They were all lynched after they were falsely accused of theft (blackberry phone and a laptop) in Aluu, a community in Ikwerre local government area, Rivers State, Nigeria on 5 October 2012. In Lagos State in 2012, a little boy was said to be burnt alive in Lagos for stealing. In 2014 also, a child reported to be as young as 7 years of age was necklaced again in Lagos for attempting to steal to Garri (cassava flakes) according to Pulse.ng. In 2016, Punch newspaper surfaced online the video of a teenager, believed to have been burnt to death in the Orile, Alafia Bus stop in Lagos for allegedly stealing a wallet. This gruesome video of the boy's lynching generated a lot of fuss and debate on social media, with the public calling for police investigation into the killing. There was also a case public lynching and settling ablaze of some suspected "*Baddo cult*" group in Ikorodu, Lagos State (The Nation Newspaper Nigeria, 2017). This study, therefore, is a qualitative investigation of the phenomenon of jungle justice in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

This study was anchored on the tenets of Social Disorganization Theory. In sociology, the social

disorganization theory is one of the most important theories developed by the Chicago School which is related to neighbourhood and ecological theories. The propositions of social disorganization theory were applied to the explanation of crime, delinquency, and other social problems by sociologists at the University of Chicago in the early 1900s. As a booming industrial city, increasingly populated by immigrants of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, the city of Chicago provided a social laboratory (society) and specimen (man) for the development of American criminology. As a theoretical approach to the study of crime, social disorganisation theory has its foundation in the process of social change. Rapid growth and change were viewed as "disorganizing" or "disintegrative" forces contributing to a breakdown in the teaching and learning of prior "social rules" which had inhibited crime and delinquency in European peasant society (Thomas and Znanieki, 1918). Also, Pfohl (1994) affirmed that high rates of non-conformity occur when there is too much social change in a time when the normative order of society is disrupted. Therefore, the theory directly links crime like jungle justice to the neighborhood and ecological characteristics, which is a core principle of social disorganization theory. Additionally, the theory implies that a person's residential location is a substantial factor that determines the likelihood of people involving in the lynching of crime suspects, which is why the study locations of this study are neighbourhoods with a history of jungle justice in Lagos metropolis.

Social disorganization theory better explains the jungle justice in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria amidst other criminological theories. The theory attributes variation in crime and delinquency which jungle justice is a part of. Over time people in Lagos metropolis have resulted in mob justice in the absence or breakdown of communal institutions especially the inadequacies of the criminal justice system, saddled with arrest and prosecution of suspected criminals. This theory further explains that jungle justice happens in the absence of law and order and this disallows offenders or criminal suspects right to life and fair hearing when caught. Jungle Justice is a breach of the law that supports social or communal relationships in a given territory of either relatively small ecological units (neighborhoods, census tracts, communities) or larger units (e.g. counties, states, and nations) that is presumed to be "organized" closely with reciprocally interactions.

METHODOLOGY

The research was descriptive-exploratory and cross-sectional in design. This implies firstly, that the study described certain features of the population using data collected and also unraveled relationships and associations between and among the selected variables. Secondly, it is cross-sectional because the fieldwork was conducted within a short period of time without any attempt to check for changes in trends over time. For the data collection, 30

in-depth interviews were conducted among selected community members most especially youths in Mushin, Ikorodu, Orile, and Surulere. Purposive sampling techniques were utilised for the selection of the respondents. The respondents that constituted mostly the youths were interviewed at bus stops, markets, T-junctions, and other public places that mob lynching takes place in Mushin, Ikorodu, Orile, and Surulere. To ensure the validity of the instrument of data collection, a pilot study was earlier conducted in Ikorodu. Thereafter, data collection started concurrently in those selected locations in Lagos metropolis. While at the analysis stage after data collection, all the elicited data were thematically and content analyzed, after the responses were transcribed verbatim and translated.

Research setting and study population

The study was conducted in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria. Modern-day Lagos, officially as known as "Lagos Metropolitan Area" in 1996 is an urban agglomeration or conurbation (Carpio, 2012) consisting of 16 LGAs including Ikeja, the state capital of Lagos State. This extended urban area makes up 37% of Lagos State's total land area and accommodates about 85% of the state's total population (Eko, 2012). The exact population of Metropolitan Lagos is disputed. In the 2006 federal census data recorded a population of about 8 million people (Lagos State Government, 2015). The figure was disputed by the Lagos State Government, putting the population of Lagos Metropolitan Area at approximately 16 million (Lagos State Government, 2015). As of 2015, unofficial figures put the population of "Greater Metropolitan Lagos", which includes Lagos and its surrounding metro area, extending as far as into Ogun State, at approximately 21 million (Lagos State Government, 2015).

The rationale behind the selection of Lagos for this study is due to the high incidence of recorded cases of jungle justice in Lagos. This is not farfetched from the population growth pace that has threatened the metropolitan safety. Consequently, this has become a security challenge to the Nigeria Police Force. Locations in the metropolis with a history of jungle justice which is Mushin, Ikorodu, Orile, and Surulere were targeted in this study. Furthermore, youths that are largely acclaimed as major perpetrators of jungle justice constituted the majority of the target population.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Here, the results that emanated from the three objectives covered in this study were discussed, logically and lucidly. The deductive method was adopted to seek themes and contents from the In-depth Interview.

Factors responsible for jungle justice in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria

The findings revealed that people out of anger, loss of lives and properties, frustration, lack of police trust, and persistent insecurity are major among other reasons for people taking laws into their hands when a criminal suspect is arrested. The findings clearly corroborate Barron and Madden (2004), that a high level of crime is the primary reason that makes people take the law into their own hands. It was also discovered that community persistent insecurity and lack of institutional trust in the

police in prosecuting a crime suspect as reasons for jungle justice. Glad et al. (2010) have similarly observed that in some circumstances individuals with economic power when they commit a certain crime, whether intentionally or unintentionally approach the authorities and bribe them. In addition, the lack of swift response of the Nigeria Police Force at the instance of arrest of the offender and lack of institutional trust of the police constituted part of the major motivating factors for the angry mobs to carry out jungle justice in Lagos metropolis. A reaction from one of the youths interviewed in Ikorodu goes thus:

"Most times out of anger of persistent theft and general insecurity make community members result to jungle justice. People that have been victimized by criminals often out of anger and vengeance take laws into their hands to demand justice for committed crimes against their lives and properties" (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Participants/Ikorodu/Muslim).

Similarly, the reason for jungle justice in Ikorodu during the height of cult activities in Ikorodu recently was stated as thus:

"Community insecurity in the era of Baddo cult group's criminal activities that perpetrated majorly killings and kidnaps of community members in Ikorodu for rituals, heightened jungle justice in Ikorodu" (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/ Ikorodu/Muslim).

Another participant interviewed acclaimed that:

"Persistent insecurity made local vigilantes to mount guard on their communities and in most cases when a crime suspect is arrested by them, jungle justice happens till maybe the person gets surrendered to the police for formal prosecution but most times the suspect is set ablaze" (IDI/ Male/ Jungle Justice Witness/Surulere/Lagos).

In another narration of a respondent:

"Many people don't trust the police and there is low police and public relationship because of the ways police have handled criminal cases has made us not to allow crime suspects to be handed over to the police and this leads to lynching of the suspects. People would rather burn at stake a crime suspect than to surrender such accused to the police for prosecution. They do so many a times as warning to other criminals when there is high level of insecurity especially if it is a case of kidnap or killings for rituals" (IDI/ Femlae/Jungle Justice Witness/Mushin/Lagos).

Another respondent said that:

“The quick to rich syndrome that has dominated our society has led to many kidnaps, killing of spouse, incest rape, in most neighborhoods in Ikorodu and this has led to frustration among people because of incessant crime and out of anger such people get lynched till their eventual deaths” (IDI/ Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Ikorodu/Lagos).

Also, many of the respondents interviewed at markets square, T-junction, bus stops, motor parks, and residential areas laid claim that community-based factors like community insecurity, shortage of policemen, ineffective policing especially delay experienced when notified of an ongoing crime makes community members result to jungle justice. One of the respondents succinctly puts it that:

“Community insecurity has led to mob justice especially if it is kidnapping, rape and theft” (IDI/ Male/ Jungle Justice Witness/Orile/Lagos).

The position of another participant depicts the situation of Nigeria Police as regards jungle justice accordingly:

“Inadequate policing and shortage of policemen to numbers of lives and properties in most especially, populated areas here in Lagos have made many communities members to result to jungle justice to wade off potential criminals” (IDI/Male/ Jungle Justice Witness/Surlere/Lagos).

Similarly, it was asserted that:

“Most times when the police are notified of a crime act and suspect is eventually nabbed, to prevent jungle justice there is always delay in police response and this often leads to lynching of arrested crime suspect by the victims of crime committed, till the eventual death of the suspects if not rescued immediately” (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Ikorodu/Lagos).

As observed by a participant also, jungle justice is as a result of the delay in a criminal prosecution. There is always delay in the prosecution of crime suspects and it has been on record that there are reoccurring face of previously handed over crime suspect to the police. So to some extent people prefer jungle justice” (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Orile/Lagos).

Adequately, it is quite revealing that the respondents noted community insecurity, lack of police trust cum slow process of crime suspects’ prosecution and delay in police dispatch when notified of an ongoing criminal act as cogent reasons why community members take laws into their hands in making a crime suspect face justice. This is assertion is however in line with the submissions of Mutabazi (2006) that mob justice is the symptom of a

society where ignorance, an incompetent justice system, and human rights violations impede access to justice. The root cause of the phenomenon is the lack of public trust in the legal and security authorities to properly handle suspected criminal cases. Also, the aforementioned responses assert further the claims of Social Disorganization Theory that jungle justice which is a crime in itself, is factored by number of neighbourhood ecological factors that lead to high rates of crime such as persistent insecurity and lack of public trust in the law enforcement agency which is the police.

Patterns of occurrence of jungle justice in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria

Most of the respondents interviewed said that the level of neighborhood crime experienced is high while some noted that crime is on the average with the presence of local vigilantes who secure such communities. However, theft was what almost all the respondents said is on the daily increase among other crimes like kidnapping, rape, and in recent times ritual killings. The following are the extracted responses. In details, one of the participants interviewed explained that:

“There is high level of petty criminals in Orile. Often time there are recorded events of neighbourhood theft which has resulted to loss of properties. People have for that reason carry out jungle justice more often. Insecurity is so worrisome that vigilante groups are now employed to secure the neighbourhood, which gives them opportunity to carry out jungle justice on caught or reported criminal suspect” (IDI/Male/ Jungle Justice Witness/Orile/Lagos).

In another response, this participant asserted that:

“The presence of local vigilante has to some extent on the rating of average reduced crime in Ikorodu which therefore has reduced jungle justice. People are more vigilant than before and residents have even formed neighbourhood watch to alert others at the sight of any criminal act to be committed against life and properties in Ikorodu” (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Ikorodu/Lagos).

Similarly, another respondent added that:

“The bringing to an end of Badoo cult activities in Ikorodu, has beefed up security and this has to some extent reduced crime and jungle justice. Although there are still be issues like petty theft that attracts jungle justice too which is now common these days because of high rate of unemployment and poverty” (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Ikorodu/Lagos).

In other word of a respondent, it was observed that increasing crime breeds jungle justice:

“In Mushin here, there is still jungle justice due to high rate of crime. Mere looking around you, you can see faces and among them criminals exists because of the over bloated population. These days everyone is a target, nobody knows who is who” (IDI, Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Mushin/Lagos).

It was also observed that crime occurrence and follow up jungle justice is caused by joblessness and need for survival. One of the participants observed that:

“In some neighbourhood the crime rate is on the average but there is always mob lynching whenever a suspected criminal is caught. In my neighbourhood for example, this happens, because there are many idle youths various crimes exists. They engage in varying degree of crime for economic sustenance” (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Surulere/Lagos).

The aforementioned responses show that jungle justice has been consistent in areas with a high rate of crime to the extent that the services of vigilante are now employed to secure lives and properties. It is also revealing that many criminals have taken advantage of the overpopulation that has caused a high level of insecurity which has allowed various crimes, especially in Mushin and Orile. According to Ng’walali and Kitinya (2006), the rise in the incidence of crime usually overwhelms law enforcement unit, which leaves the public to take justice in their own hands. The respondents also ascertained crime that attracts jungle justice in their neighbourhood. One of the respondents interviewed revealed that:

“Kidnap and killings for rituals in Ikorodu has been met with jungle justice” (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Ikorodu/Lagos).

A respondent laid claim that:

“Petty crimes like pick pocketing attract more of jungle justice” (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Orile/Lagos).

Another said that:

“Rape and stealing is always met with jungle justice when the crime suspect is caught instead of allowing the police to take custody of such crime suspect” (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Surulere/Lagos).

Also a participant observed that:

“In Mushin there are a lot of petty criminals that rob people of their valuables” (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Participants/Mushin/Lagos).

Still, in the purview of the research objective, the qualitative data gathered revealed that almost all those that were interviewed unanimously laid claim to the use of tyres and petrol most especially to set crime suspects ablaze if such person is not quickly rescued by the police. Also, other methods like the use of stones, logs of wood, machetes, stones, dirty gutter water, acid, broomstick to torture genital organs, belts or wires, and so on are used when lynching a crime suspect. This however supports the assertion of Fourchard (2008) who argued that more often than not, crime suspects are believably subjected to inhuman treatment that could impact negatively the rest of their lives. These inhuman treatments could be in the form of abysmal torture, subjecting suspects to the drinking of poisons, nailing of suspects on the head, beaten or killing, and burning without recourse to the judicial process. For instance one of the youths interviewed in the street of Orile, Lagos said that:

“Suspect of crime, are always subjected to inhumane treatment as they get tortured with brooms in their genital organs, drinking of dirty gutter waters, acid bath, logs of wood and if not rescued immediately from the angry mob, he or she gets set ablaze as with petrol and tyre on the neck. This is the normal practice of jungle justice in Lagos State” (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Orile/Lagos).

Similarly, another participant described that inhumane judgment melted on crime suspect as follows:

“In case of serious crime like kidnap, rape and murder, the crime suspect is dealt with using cutlass, belts, wire sticks, stones and later set ablaze using petrol with tyre across his or her neck. Last year during the incessant lynching of suspected Badoo cult members, many of those caught or suspected to be members were set ablaze with petrol and tyre. An upcoming comedian in Ikorodu even fell victim before people got to know he was misidentified as Badoo cult members” (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Ikorodu/Lagos).

A respondent put it succinctly as:

“Stones, belt or horse-whip, stick, petrol and tyres are used to deal with suspect of jungle justice till their eventual death” (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Surulere/Lagos).

An interviewee also said that:

“Wires, stones, belt, sticks, dirty water and battery water are most often time use to torture crime suspect to confess committing the crime he or she is accused of” (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Mushin/Lagos).

It is very vivid in the responses as regards the method

used in executing jungle justice that these methods negate the law that stipulates citizens' right to arrest offender and surrender such person to the police for a formal prosecution of the criminal justice system. This, however, supports the definition of Outwater et al. (2011), Ng'walali and Kitinya (2006) and Paulsen (2002) that mob justice is the practice whereby a mob, usually several dozens or several hundred persons take the law into their hands in order to injure and kill a person accused of wrongdoing. However, the information gathered from the in-depth interview conducted among respondents' also revealed that jungle justice occurs often as there is no month in some areas in Mushin, Orile, Ikorodu, and Surulere do not experience public lynching. Although there could be months those areas are jungle justice free when criminals escape being caught. This is attributed to the level of crime occurrence in such a community. A participant had this to say:

"Jungle justice is so common that here in Orile in a month, jungle justice is recorded 2 to 3 times because we experience everyday crime and the police are not that trusted in prosecuting an offender. There have been cases of reoccurring faces of arrested and surrendered criminals in the neighbourhood" (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Orile/Lagos).

Another respondent observed that:

"Jungle justice happens almost every month especially at the market or motor park because in those areas there are more of crimes like pick-pocketing, bag snatching, phone snatching and so on" (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Mushin/Lagos).

Also a respondent in Ikorodu said that:

"Jungle justice was common during the badoo cult nefarious activities in Ikorodu. When anybody connected to crimes like killing of a whole family, kidnapping and rituals is caught people prefer jungle justice because of the gravity of crime committed" (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Ikorodu/Lagos).

The aforementioned responses on patterns of occurrence of Jungle Justice in Lagos Metropolis Nigeria corroborate the tenet of social disorganization theory which classifies jungle justice as a form of street crime which happens as a result of rapid growth and change, viewed as "disorganizing" or "disintegrative" forces contributing to a breakdown in the teaching and learning of those prior "social rules" which had inhibited crime and delinquency (Thomas and Znanieki, 1918). Also according to Pfohl (1994) high rates of non-conformity occur when there is too much social change in much a time which has the normative order of society disrupted.

Security implications of jungle justice in Lagos metropolis, Nigeria

The qualitative data reveals that the majority of the respondents attested that jungle justice has in some ways provided some level of safety for their communities. Potential criminal, criminals or gang of criminals get a strong signal or warning from the events of jungle justice in those communities but that does not mean as said by the respondents in Orile, Mushin, Ikorodu and Surulere that jungle justice as brought about long term security. Intermittently they still experience crime against life and properties which range from petty theft, rape, robbery, kidnapping, and murder. Also, few of those interviewed reported that jungle justice has not in any way provided community safety rather the community is known as criminal dens and many crimes especially petty crime and burglary persists.

A respondent observed that:

"Life and properties are secured to some extent because jungle justice is like a warning for potential criminals. The issue of incessant house bugle though still happens but it has reduced in Surulere. Also cases of rape and kidnapping have significantly reduced" (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Surulere/Lagos).

In similar response, a respondent had this to say in Orile:

"There are still instances of insecurities in the neighbourhood, although the report especially of petty crimes and burglary is not as much like before. Jungle justice has become a sort of streets vigilantism" (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Orile/Lagos).

The findings clearly reveal also that jungle justice is neighbourhood safety. A participant in Surulere observed thus:

"To some extent jungle justice has brought about community safety and security for live and properties. People can now sleep at night. I guess the public disgrace, shaming and beating that crime suspect go through and death if angry mob are not quickly disperse by police to rescue the lynched crime suspect has reduce crime" (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Surulere/Lagos).

In Ikorodu, a respondent had this to say:

"Rape, kidnap and ritual killings of Badoo cult groups in Ikorodu most especially has been reduced of the high level of jungle justice meted out on suspected cult groups. Jungle justice has deterred others to further engage in such nefarious activities" (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Ikorodu/Lagos).

A respondent in Mushin affirmed the security implication on businesses as thus:

“When there is jungle justice especially in busy areas, show owners do fall victims of shop lifting when jungle justice perpetrators lurk around for what to use like petrol, matches, stick, stones and so on, for lynching. Although the knowing that jungle justice in Mushin can happen if caught has sacred many criminals but crime still happens” (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Mushin/Lagos).

Also, when probe further many of the responses gathered from the in-depth interview implies that the level of security that mob lynching has provided for individuals that could be victims of circumstance when misidentified as a crime suspect and get lynched is minimal. They further asserted that everybody is at risk of jungle justice due to misidentification. These affirmations, therefore, corroborate Cloete and Stevens (2004) that the incidence of ‘mob justice’ affects the economy, and, according to social disorganization theory, jungle justice is a product of unfavorable conditions in certain communities. Young people in their productive labour if not killed in significant numbers could have been an economic asset to the country. Also during a public lynching, people can use such evens to rob nearby shops in search of what to use to torture the prime suspect. In Orile, Ikorodu, Surulere, and Mushin, almost all the respondents interviewed asserted that jungle justice has surpassed formal policing. Many of them further claimed that it is on record that police dispatch do come late when notified by community members that crime is ongoing and even when they come either notified or not, people deny them to take charge of the crime suspect for formal prosecution because there is lack of public trust informal policing. A respondent observed that:

“Jungle justice has really affected formal policing because when it happens the victim(s) might have been lynched to death before the police come to the rescue of the situation” (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Mushin/Lagos).

In the word of a respondent, loophole in formal policing breeds jungle justice:

“Formal policing is poor as most of the time in some cases, police have are found abetting crime and criminals. Many at times when people get arrested for crime committed, they get released back to the street” (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Participant/Mushin/Lagos).

Similarly, a participant said that:

“Jingle justice has really made people ignorant of Nigeria Police Force even if they are at the crime scene as

people prefer “instance justice”. Criminals cannot be trusted in the hands of the police. Many at times there are recurring faces of criminals that were known arrested or surrendered to the police by community members” (IDI/Male/Jungle Justice Witness/Ikorodu/Lagos).

In another word of a respondent:

“People have this notion that Nigeria Police Force is complicit in crime and so jungle justice has made them infective. In Surulere many at times people have resulted to justice in their refusal to surrender a crime suspect to police men and the person who might be innocent get lynched and set ablaze by angry mob” (IDI/Female/Jungle Justice Witness/Surulere/Lagos).

The aforementioned security implication of jungle justice which denies the suspect the “right of an offender” aligns with social disorganization theory that attributes variation in crime and delinquency which jungle justice is a part, over time among territories, to the absence or breakdown of communal institutions especially the inadequacies of the criminal justice system that is saddled with arrest, and prosecution of suspected criminals. This theory explains jungle justice in terms of the absence or breakdown of law and order that guarantees offenders or criminal suspect right to life and fair hearing when caught breaking the law that supports social or communal relationships in a given territory of either relatively small ecological units (neighborhoods, census tracts, communities) or larger units (e.g. counties, states, and nations) that is presumed to be “organized” closely with reciprocally interactions.

Conclusion

It was vividly exposed in this study that jungle justice is a factor of consistent insecurity of lives and properties in Lagos State and lack of public trust in Nigeria Police Force and their servicemen. However, Jungle justice is a societal problem that affects lives and properties as no one is exempted from becoming victims of mob lynching and its other attendant dangers it poses to lives and properties. To curb the incidence, there must be a concerted effort of all institutions. Therefore, a number of approaches must be taken in dealing with this jungle justice in Lagos metropolis.

First, citizens should be more aware of their environment and statutory laws that bind them in securing their lives and dignity of other’s lives and properties. The public should educate themselves on their constitutional right to arrest a crime suspect and immediate surrender for formal prosecution. Second, the public should not support any form of instant justice and always group themselves against any form of it at the arrest of a crime suspect. The public should know that

anybody can be a victim of jungle justice and ensure that accused persons of crime committed are handed over to the police for proper investigation. Third, community security groups most especially the vigilante, should be made to understand that jungle justice is a crime itself and as such their duty is also to curb jungle justice. However, community interest groups like landlord associations, youth associations, and clubs among many other organized societies, should preach against any sort of jungle justice in their neighborhood.

Most importantly, The Nigerian Police should be more proactive in their response to crime, to preempt any sort of jungle justice, and be more honourable in dealing with cases of accused person(s) of crime committed. Justice delayed could amount to justice denied; the Nigeria Police Force should therefore make sure the speedy cases of crime suspects(s) and make it public to the victims of such crime(s). In addition, The Nigeria police should establish a police-community trust relationship in their statutory roles of crime prevention and control in their promoting and maintaining law and order. Distress calls lines and police at strategic locations that have history of jungle justice or that are prone to such should be made available. Finally, the activities of the community security groups and local vigilante should be properly and often checkmated by the Nigeria Police and made known to them their limit in the arrest, custody and prosecution of crime suspect(s) in their duties of informal community policing through community workshop on informal policing.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has not declared any conflict of interests.

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