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## Social protection: A tool for crime prevention in Nigeria? Case study of Owerri Municipal Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria

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# SOCIAL POLICY IN DEMAND

A Working Paper Series

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## **“Social Protection: A Tool for Crime Prevention in Nigeria? Case study of Owerri Municipal Local Government Area, Imo State, Nigeria.”**

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## Abstract

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This study intends to contribute to the discourse on social protection and crime. The study assessed social protection as a tool for crime prevention, with bias to Owerri municipal local government area of Imo state, Nigeria as a case study. The study employed a qualitative approach which allowed the researcher to explore experiences and perspectives of selected participants. Purposive sampling was considered appropriate for the defined population. In-depth interview and focus group discussion (FGD) served as data collection instruments. A review of available literature, reports, newspaper publications, reports, and various internet sources were exhaustively utilised to gather secondary data.

The study revealed that social protection possesses the potential to prevent crime. The study informed that certain intervention programmes established by the government helped in decreasing crime incidences in the area under study. In addition, the study revealed that social protection enhances wellbeing, empowers people, promotes better living conditions, imbues a sense of belonging and inclusiveness, promotes social stability and does not lead to dependency. However, the study revealed that social protection alone is incapable of eradicating crime.

**Keywords:** Social Protection; Crime; Tool; Potential; Nigeria.

*This paper was written as part of a master's thesis at the Department Social Policy and Social Security Studies of the Hochschule Bonn-Rhein-Sieg University of Applied Sciences. The supervision was carried out by Dr.Barbara Rohregger and Professor Esther Schüring.*

## Table of Content

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<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>1 Introduction</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>What is crime prevention?</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Understanding social protection and crime linkages</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Crime incidences in Owerri municipal local government area</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>2 Methodology</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>3 Results</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Possesses crime prevention potential.</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Impacts on crime rate</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Enhances wellbeing</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Supports the poor and promotes better living</b> .....	<b>11</b>
<b>Upholds personal dignity and self-worth.</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Creates sense of belonging and inclusiveness</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Does not lead to dependency</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Possesses empowerment potential</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Incapable of eradicating crime.</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Promotes equity and social stability</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>4 Discussion</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>5 Conclusion</b> .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>References</b> .....	<b>22</b>

## 1 Introduction

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Every society desires to exist free from criminality because crime portends far-reaching effects capable of disrupting peaceful coexistence and the development of a society. No one feels safe in a society characterised by criminality. For this reason, every society adopts measures it deems fit in addressing it. Crime is equally a fuzzy phenomenon as criminologists and sociologists contend with what accounts for a crime as it is diverse, subjective and depends largely on perspectives, events or legal analysis. Regardless the complexities, the middle-point is that crime refers to a negation of what the law of a society states or an aberration of expected societal conducts.

This study does not seek to describe facets of crime as it is outside the scope of this study. Focus is restricted to common reported offenses including violent acts which cause harm or loss to the victims such as armed robbery, kidnapping, ritual killing, burglary, human-trafficking and rape. Therefore, the study looks at two phenomenon that have rarely been associated in the past: crime prevention and social protection.

### **What is crime prevention?**

Meško and Kury (2009) remarked that crime prevention are measures directed at specific forms of crime which involve the management and manipulation of the immediate environment, i.e., all actions initiated towards ensuring crime do not occur. Welsh and Farrington (2012) affirmed that crime prevention includes programmes and policies designed to prevent crime, stating that crime prevention is proactive. Van Dijk and deWaard (1991) described crime prevention as strategies instituted by the government and other stakeholders by reducing the various social and environmental factors that increase the risk of crime.

### **Understanding social protection and crime linkages**

With respect to social protection, Devereux and Sabates-Wheeler (2004) described social protection as all public and private initiatives that provide income or consumption transfers to the poor and guarding them from unmitigated risk. Harvey, Holmes, Slater, and Martin (2007) adduced that social protection has become as essential as health, education, water and sanitation. The main objective of social protection is to reduce poverty, vulnerability as well as to help people to better respond to shocks (Hanlon, Barrientos and Hulme,2010).

The National Bureau of Statistics report on poverty and inequality in Nigeria (NBS,2019) revealed that 40 percent of Nigeria's population which translates to 83 million people, live below the poverty line. With a \$1.90 daily personal income in a country with deficits in basic amenities, limited or non-existent social programmes, it is not difficult to see why Nigeria is a major contributor of extreme and multi-dimensional poverty, which the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP,2018) describes as multiple overlapping deprivations in critical areas of health,education and standard of living. Dwindling oil revenue, intermittent recession and other socioeconomic issues have brought about job losses thereby exacerbating the already high unemployment rate in the country.

Fleisher (1966) and Buonanno (2003) found a relationship between labour market and delinquent behaviours. They submitted that poverty, social exclusion, wage and income inequality are push factors in influencing an individual's propensity to commit crime. Beirne (1987) corroborated this assertion stating that the root causes of crime include individual poverty and income inequality. Moreso, Cook, Ludwig, and Mccrary (2011) affirmed the existence of a cross-sectional correlation between poverty and crime, postulating that criminal offending and victimization are disproportionately concentrated among disadvantaged people living in economically distressed areas. Fajnzylber, Lederman and Loayza (2000) in their review: 'What causes violent crime?' posited that a rise in inequality may also have a crime-inducing effect by reducing the individual's moral threshold referred to as 'Envy effect'.

Predictably, crime rate in Nigeria have soared. Armed robbery, assassination, kidnapping, rape, ritual- killing, cult-clashes,violent disposessions and bandit attacks have become almost a daily occurrence. It is important to note also that these are reported crimes only, meaning that unaccounted crimes as a result of under-reporting are not covered in this discourse.

Crime incidences seem to assume Nigeria's geo-political set-up. Since 2015 to date, the North-East and North-West in Nigeria has been beset with ferocious insurgency and banditry. The North-Central with states like Plateau, Benue and Kwara are grappling with armed herdsmen, killing and destroying farmlands. Kidnappings and bank robberies have become rife in the South-East; the South-South has grown notoriety with militancy, hostage- taking and vandalization of oil installations, while the South-West is gradually being crippled with ritual- killings for wealth. NBS(2016) report recorded a total of 125,790 cases. The report noted that property offence had the highest number with 65,397 cases. Offence against persons had 45,554 cases while crimes against lawful authority and local acts offence recorded 12,144 and 2,695 cases

respectively. Nwankwo and Okolie-Osemene (2016) adduced that in addition to these reported offences, fatal bank robberies have been on the rise contributing about 50% of Nigeria's total crime fatalities.

## **Crime incidences in Owerri municipal local government area**

'*The Point Newspaper*' - an online news medium reported that crime in Owerri municipal local government area which doubles as the capital of Imo State is on the rise with daily reportage of armed-robbery, kidnapping, cultism and bulgary. The publication pointed out that between April and December 2017, armed-robbery cases rose to 122 in 8 months, with bank robberies recording more fatalities. According to the publication, five people, including two policemen, were killed when ten robbers attacked a commercial bank in the area. In a similar event, armed robbers trailed bank customers who withdrew cash, robbing them as they departed the bank. The newspaper reported that the armed robbers often posed as bank customers but kept watch for customers withdrawing large amounts of cash in order to rob them. Aside robberies, 96 kidnapping cases were reported including the arrest of perhaps the youngest armed robbery suspect in the world; an Eight-year-old boy who began robbing nearby villages at the age of five. (The Point Newspaper: March 26, 2018).

Fatal bank robberies and other increasing violent crimes in Owerri municipal local government informed the decision to use it as a case study. Despite huge yearly monetary allocations to security agencies crime rate continues to soar. Conventional crime prevention strategies such as increased policing, arrests and fines seem to be ineffective. This study will therefore assess the potential of social protection as a crime prevention tool. The question posed by this study is:

- ***How does social protection programmes such as cash transfer, labour market intervention, social insurance, social assistance and old-age pension prevent crime in Nigeria?***

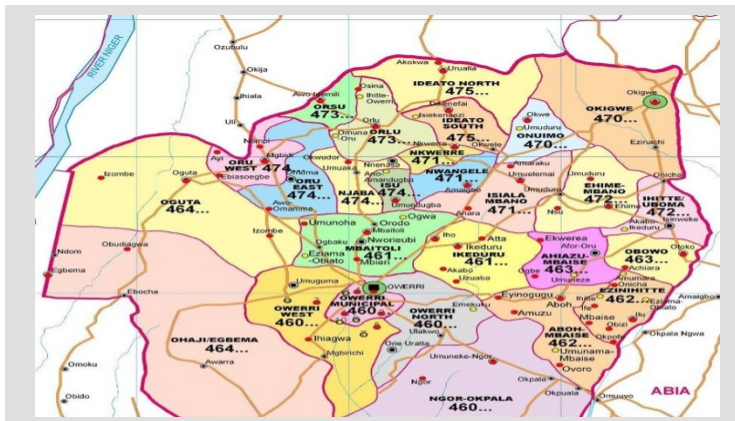
It is envisaged that policy makers will find this study a resourceful document capable of informing them on policy directions based on key issues raised here. This research work is conceived of as a veritable literature to expand the frontiers of knowledge and contribute to ongoing debates on social protection interventions.



## 2 Methodology

The framework of this research is qualitative in nature. Geographically, the scope of the research study was restricted to the case study- Owerri municipal local government area of Imo state, Nigeria. Owerri municipal is one of the twenty-seven local government areas in Imo State. Owerri municipal is located right inside the capital of the city of Owerri consisting of the districts of Owerri Urban and New Owerri. Traditionally, five villages namely – Umuororonjo, Amawom, Umuonyeche, Umuodu and Umuoyima (communally known as Owerri Nchi Ise), make up the local government area.

*Figure 1: Title of figure (Map of Imo State with the study area highlighted at the middle)*



Source: ResearchGate.Net

For this study, 20 residents of Owerri municipal local government area of Imo state were purposively sampled as a representation of the case study. 10 residents were selected for the in-depth interview, and another 10 for the FGD. All participants were assigned numbers for organizational purposes (see appendix). In total, 20 participants were selected for this study. Participants were sought through visitation to the area under study. All participants for the study aged between 18-67years, which helped to present diverse perspectives. A prepared open-ended questionnaire (see appendix) was utilised, and pilot-tested for validity. Actual data collection took place in January 2019 in Owerri Municipal LGA, Imo State, Nigeria. Interviews held face-to-face at interviewees' residences, while the FGD took place in a rented classroom. Participants were thoroughly briefed on the research purpose and process and they signed a letter of informed consent. There was no coercion of any sort. All interviews were recorded with the permission of respondents using a mobile telephone device which was transcribed verbatim into a Microsoft Word document. Verification of data was done by thoroughly rechecking the transcripts and mappings to ensure it is in accordance with what was earlier recorded.

A thematic analysis of data collected was adopted for the analysis of the emerging data. An integrated approach combining inductive and the grounded theory method was utilised. Manual coding was used in highlighting reoccurring keywords or phrases. Relying on his expertise on the subject matter and existing literature, the researcher infused themes from the flow of keywords emanating from the data analysed so as to ensure precision. Member- checking was utilised to confirm if participant's exact words and expressions were well-captured. This was used to lessen researcher bias, loss of data, response bias, ambiguity and also improve validation of the data obtained.

The researcher acknowledges that the non-probability nature of sampling, a small sample size and inherent flaws in this type of research contributed to the limitations of the study. However, the adoption of both interviews and FGD helped reduce response bias and infuse reliability in the data collected.

### 3 Results

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#### **Possesses crime prevention potential.**

All of the participants agreed that social protection could prevent crime. They submitted that hunger, lack and deprivity propels people to crime. One of the respondents averred that the provision of assistance to mitigate hunger and strife will prevent people from committing crime.

*He stated thus:*

*"It is easier to prevent crime than reduce it. If our government is serious these programmes will remove those conditions that give rise to crime. As they say: A hungry man is an angry man. If I have enough to eat, I will not be thinking of stealing from another. Go to those posh areas in 'Ikenegbu' here in Owerri municipal you hardly hear of crime, but these local areas, it is a daily occurrence. Even the ones perpetuated in those posh areas are done by people from the slums. How many times have you seen a wealthy man's child arrested for robbery? It is not common because why would they steal when they are comfortable? Target some social welfare programmes in these local areas to meet the needs of poor families, you will see that many people will lose the urge to commit crime. They won't even think it because, they would have prevented it in the first place; you think of something first, plan it and then execute. Good programmes that support people especially the poor will reduce criminal thoughts and crime will be prevented. (FGD participant 2)*

An elderly participant interviewed spoke about his time abroad and now he is retired and has returned home.

*“The government don’t pay pension regularly unlike abroad. Even though I lived abroad but my house is here and my family is here too. I sometimes hear people are owed months of pension areas, how do they want them to survive? The other day I saw in the news the police parading a 65-year-old man as part of a robbery gang, and when interviewed he said he had no one taking care of him and his pension hasn’t been paid since 2015. (Interview participant 10)*

He said he felt bad that old people who are no longer strong enough are being pushed to crime as a result of not been catered for. He urged government to ensure pensions are paid unconditionally.

### **Impacts on crime rate**

All the participants acknowledged that the unemployment intervention programme ‘Youth must work’ in Imo State, which has been discontinued at the time of this study, had a significant impact on crime rate.

*“The Youth must work programme was intended to engage youths with one work or the other. It was a good program with great impact, because the rate at which youths were idle was alarming and you know no society can have an army of idle youths and go to sleep. It is not possible. So as this program came, the money was paid monthly, youths were happy and it went a long way in reducing incidence of crime in Owerri municipal. The impact was felt almost immediately. (FGD Participant 4)*

Another participant stated that:

*“That program was good, the impact was instant, infact it’s a good idea. It was mostly felt by the youths at least they go out daily and come back doing something and at the end of the month, they get paid. It is better than nothing. I wish it continued, because right now I don’t have a job but I rely on my savings but if it finishes, I don’t know what else to do since there are no jobs now in the country. So, I will say it had a lot of impact because many of them including myself could afford things without relying on anyone or looking for who to rob especially in this Owerri municipal. During that time, if you go to ‘Douglas’ area where these boys who smoked all day and come at night to steal people’s phones, you won’t hear such then. It greatly impacted I can tell you. Infact, I saw some of them going to mark attendance in schools in order to be paid that monthly*

*stipend. But since the program stopped, they have started again” (Interview participant 2)*

Most of the participants tried to compare crime rate during the time the intervention programme was operational and when it stopped. They submitted that the programme had a great impact as crime rate dropped drastically in the local government and the state in general.

## **Enhances wellbeing**

All the participants agreed that social protection enhances wellbeing of individuals. They suggested that deprivation decreases wellbeing.

*“This life shouldn’t be only for the rich and mighty. Put smile on people’s faces, better their well-being and they will be happy, live longer and healthier. Don’t you know poverty alone can make you sick?” (Interview Participant 8)*

*Another participant noted:*

*The well-being of citizens you are ruling is important. Is it until people start dropping dead or behaving irrationally, they will realise they need to provide welfare programmes to alleviate the suffering masses? This type of support can improve the overall well-being of people and this desperation which has almost turned all our youths to criminals will seize. People are not happy. (FGD participant)*

The participants opined that people experience a good life of happiness, satisfaction, fulfillment and some level of prosperity when supported. The findings acknowledged that wellbeing of individuals should be one of the primary focus of government as some sickness and frustrations in the country were poverty induced.

## **Supports the poor and promotes better living**

In relation to improving the standard of living, all the participants agreed that social protection helps support the poor and promote better living.

*“Yes, I know about N-Power and I am a beneficiary. It is really a great support, because*

*there is a lot of unemployment now in the country and providing for oneself is hard. If you look around you will see people finding it difficult to eat 3 square meals a day.*

*Basic*

*things like housing have become too expensive, how do you pay if you don’t have*

money?

*You need support. This type of support from the government is what is needed so that poor people can use it to support their livelihood. (Interview participant 7)*

*An FGD participant confirms:*

*"I receive stipends at the end of the month for my work done and I use it to support myself. It's been supportive because I use it to take care of myself and younger ones financially and provide necessary things. I mean how will I eat, buy cloths and pay rent if there was no such support. I'm not working, there's no job anywhere. It's a life saver, without it living would have been hell. I would have suffered alot." (FDG Participant 7)*

The participants submitted that some persons are incapable of providing for themselves as a result of the economic situation in the country. They opined that lack of support distresses and increases suffering. They agreed that social protection betters people living condition.

### **Upholds personal dignity and self-worth.**

All the participants felt that government support preserves personal dignity and self-worth.

*"There is no dignity in been poor but it is more shameful when nobody cares. In this country if you are poor, you are a nobody. The kind of system we operate takes care of no one. It is all man for himself, that's why people kill and do all sorts to live. Personally, I find it very difficult to beg, it is downgrading and dehumanizing. Begging takes away your dignity as a human being. (interview participant 3)*

*Another partiipant notes:*

*"If you are poor, you are vulnerable. Infact, you have no self-worth, no dignity. People will intimidate you as they like. Those children in the North recruited into Boko haram I heard some of them were promised as little as 500 Naira to go and blow up a Church or Mosque. They no longer value their lives, it is worthless. Poverty can even make you commit suicide when you have no idea where your next meal will come from...a cash transfer program can give you hope and your dignity will be intact."(FGD participant 9)*

From the data analysed, it was apparent that all of the participants were unanimous in stating that, rather than begging for alms from fellow citizens, it is better for government to institute social protection interventions which will help protect people's dignity.

### **Creates sense of belonging and inclusiveness**

One of the participants who knew a cash transfer beneficiary pointed out that people could derive sense of belonging when supported with social protection. The participant said such programmes indicated that government cared about them and had not left them behind to suffer alone. The participant revealed that the beneficiary felt proud to be associated with the country.

*“One of my customers in Bornu state where I used to buy fish and sell was affected by Boko haram problem. Her shop was destroyed, everything gone. But when this government introduced that five-thousand-naira cash transfer to victims, at first she didn't believe until she started receiving alerts. She said in her entire life nobody has given her such support. She is proud to be called a Nigerian and she feels being part of Nigeria, you see, just because of that care shown to her. It is not every time the government should be interested in tax or internally generated revenue, what are they doing for the people they are leading? (Interview participant 9)*

An FGD participant noted:

*“The cash transfer programme is good...there is a good feeling that comes with getting alerts. When such comes from the government through a programme, you will feel you are cared for and part of the country. People want to be shown love and care you know” (Interview participant 1)*

Another participant put forward that:

*“I was happy when I learned about the programme. It shows that the government is aware of the situation in the country. For me, such programmes is put there to carry everybody along and makes you think you aren't left out. It is just natural to feel loved when been cared for... I believe such programmes can create that feeling of being part of the Nigerian project in people and this is quite important for nation building. (FGD participant 1)*

The participants remarked that perhaps if the government had taken social interventions seriously, many Nigerians would feel loved and included in the Nigerian project rather than been taxed always without commensurate support.

## Does not lead to dependency

Majority of the participants of this study disagreed that the provision of social protection to individuals or families leads to dependency. This finding addresses the belief that social interventions may lead people to become dependant in the long run.

*"I do not see how a people who were sacked from their livelihood due to carelessness of the government can be termed lazy because of payment of small amounts which may not even be regular. Instead of saying they will be dependent why not give them the money first, train them in coping strategies or even relocate them to areas they can be productive once more." (FGD participant 9)*

Another participant notes:

*"...When it comes to the CCT, bear in mind that the cash given is not forever, so people will save knowing that it is just to assist them for now" I know people who voluntarily resigned from the programme because they got a job elsewhere. Infact, if you go to the programme's website you will see people's testimonies. Especially people in the North where there is a large expanse of land, many of these beneficiaries have gone into farming. They have taken advantage of the rice revolution of the present administration and are now earning large sums from their produce. That doesn't sound to me like people that are depending on the programme. Generally, Nigerians are not lazy people."(FGD participant 1)*

A participant expressed a contrary view with a caution:

*"Well, I will say the programme is a good one because of the numerous potential it has. Crime in this area is becoming uncontrollable and if nothing is done fast, we might all be engulfed. But also, caution should be exercised in implementing these programmes. You know why, looking at some of these youths who don't want to do anything, with such programmes in place, you have sent them on a technical retirement. They will just depend on it and do nothing because they know at the end of the month, government will give them money. They will just relax. Especially that cash transfer one, people like free money and wouldn't want it to stop. So I suggest something permanent like a job." ( FGD participant 3)*

Going by the majority, the participants asserted that getting help when necessary is not a sign of weakness, rather serves a springboard to pull people out of poverty they might have accidentally fallen into.

## **Possesses empowerment potential**

The participants revealed that the provision of social protection interventions could help empower people. One of the participants explained that:

*“These programmes are good if our government will be serious about it. They should not look at it as just giving people money, they should see it as financially empowering people so that they can make the best out of their lives. We all need a little help at some point... (FGD participant 10)*

*Another participant added:*

*“I saw in the news a case of a young man from the North who used his N-power stipends to set-up a poultry farm. He voluntarily resigned from the program after his business has picked up. Today that young guy is doing well financially. So, this sort of programs shouldn’t be seen as only helping the poor but also helping to direct those who might have missed their career paths or being initially unable to fend for themselves as a result of capital. Raising capital is very difficult in Nigeria, the government should see the programme as empowering the citizens” (FGD participant 5)*

He enthused that these programmes help people preserve finances which could be later utilised in learning additional skills, thereby enhancing their income potential. The participants noted that social protection programmes initiated encouraged people to save-up and invest their income so that when they exit the program, they will equally exit poverty.

## **Incapable of eradicating crime.**

All the participants pointed out that social protection is incapable of completely eradicating crime. One of the interview participants noted:

*“Of course, it is a laudable programme but you and I know that there is no society where crime can be totally eradicated but only minimized. So, programmes like these ones will go a long way in minimizing it not eradicating it. It is just not possible...never!” (Interview participant 1)*

*“I know the present government gives youths money every month. It really helps to prevent the number of crimes committed in the state but it cannot totally eradicate crime because even armed robbers who make a lot of money from their robbery*



*continue to steal until they are caught. In any case, programmes that assist people survive in hard times does help but cannot make crime disappear. (FGD participant 10)*

The participants explained that improving infrastructure and providing social amenities is required to ensure crime is drastically reduced. They noted that the success or failure of a social protection programme could be determined by the infrastructure available in the country as the programme architectures such as receipt of cash transfers and other benefits could rely heavily on electricity and technology to function properly.

### **Promotes equity and social stability**

Data analysed from this study established that the participants agreed that social protection gives a sense of equity and promotes social stability.

*“These programmes have a lot of role to play if well implemented. A popular saying goes: ‘Help me now, not when I die you start crying’ since not everybody can be a billionaire, why not try to balance it. Aside fighting crime, programmes of these type can help bridge the widening gap between the rich and poor. In Nigeria now, the middle class is gone... you are either very rich or poor. You can’t have a few people amassing all the wealth and a large chunk left down the social strata. That is injustice and there will be instability and turmoil and that is what we are witnessing...” (Interview participant 9)*

*Another participant agreed and noted that:*

*“The inequality in this country is too much. Government should find a way to distribute this wealth, only a few people hold on to it. If you want peace and stability, then ensure justice is done by treating everyone equally because this country belongs to all of us and particularly, this local government.”(Interview participant 1)*

Participants acknowledged that social protection could help reduce envy and strife been exacerbated by poverty and inequality. They suggested that intervention programmes could help curtail deprivations which often lead to resentments and strife in the society.

## **4 Discussion**

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The central theme across the data analysed is that social protection possesses the potential to diminish push factors which lure people into crime. Therefore, efforts

should be made to address the issue of crime by first tackling causal factors rather than employing punitive measures. Weiler and Waller (1984) cited in Olajide and Diah (2017) corroborated this, stating that persistent and serious criminals often come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and attempts to respond with more coercive and punitive sanctions are likely to be ineffective. Olajide and Diah (2017) opined that greater resources should be directed towards providing strong, accessible targeted social programmes focusing on underlying issues relating to the family, school and life experiences for children and young people which often predict future criminal behaviour. This suggests a rethinking of crime prevention strategies, positioning social protection as a viable tool.

The findings also revealed that the discontinued unemployment intervention tagged 'Youth must work' in Imo state, had a significant impact on crime rate especially among unemployed youths. This assertion tallied with the findings of Raphael and Winter-Ebmer (2001) as they examined the effects of unemployment on crime in the US. They submitted that decreases in property crime rates can be explained in part to decreases in unemployment rates.

More so, the findings of this study revealed that social protection possesses the potential to enhance wellbeing of individuals. This was made known in participants responses- that people could experience a good life of happiness, satisfaction, fulfillment, and some level of prosperity when supported. The findings acknowledged that wellbeing of individuals should be one of the primary focus of government as certain sickness and frustrations are poverty induced. Unemployment is a major stressor that can be linked to physical and mental illness, including alcoholism, family violence and high crime rates (Hiew and MacDonald, 1986).

The study revealed that social protection upholds self-worth and dignity. Platt (1984) affirmed that when individuals lose their job, they inevitably lose some aspect of their own personal identity. Though every human being expects to be recognised and valued as an important member of society, social risks expose some persons to situations above their capacity to support themselves. As revealed by the data analysed, participants suggested that being poor and vulnerable emasculates people and renders them powerless to fend for themselves and their families which they agreed that such a situation rubs-off on people's self-worth and dignity.

Another interesting finding of this study is that social protection has the potential to empower people. It revealed that the provision of income benefits and cash transfers helped people preserve finances which were later utilised in learning additional skills,

thereby enhancing their income potential. The participants noted that social protection programmes initiated by the government encouraged saving-up and investing. This finding tallies with the assertions of Barrientos et al. (2005), submitting that social protection helps people to conserve and accumulate assets and to transform their socioeconomic relationships.

Furthermore, findings from this study revealed that people could derive a sense of belonging through the provision of social protection. This was enunciated on the premise that such programmes meant that government is not insensitive to their plight. In support, the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, ECLAC(2013) report in Santiago, Chile revealed that the persistent dynamic of inequality and exclusion is reflected in the tools available to individuals and families for protecting themselves and securing better living conditions which impacts not only on their levels of material wellbeing but also on their perception of a shared social and institutional project.

Data from the study revealed that most of the participants disagreed with the notion that the provision of social protection to individuals or families leads to dependency. Most of the participants agreed that getting help when necessary is not a sign of weakness, rather serves a springboard to pull people out of poverty they might have accidentally fallen into. The findings concurred with the report of the FAO (2017) which explained that cash transfers do not lead to dependency, rather families make productive investments in agricultural inputs and productive activities such as starting small businesses, and investing in livestock ownership among others. However, a divergent view was expressed too, that caution should be taken in establishing interventions as it could encourage laziness.

Findings of this study revealed that social protection alone is incapable of eradicating crime. The participants explained that improving infrastructure and providing social amenities is required to ensure crime is drastically reduced. They noted that the success or failure of a social protection programme could be determined by the infrastructure available in the country. For instance, stable electricity and a good telecommunication network is important for data capturing and mobile transfer of cash to beneficiaries. Responses from the participants suggested that social interventions could promote equity and social stability. Agreeing that through the redistribution of wealth, social protection could help reduce inequality and diminish envy which were often responsible for societal upheavals. This position was supported by Grundler and Cheuermeyer (2014), as they noted that high rates of inequality may produce social instability.

## 5 Conclusion

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This study highlights that when livelihoods are threatened, abiding by the law or any form of societal norm becomes relegated. To maintain law and order, people should be sufficiently catered for as it is difficult for people to hold their peace when facing unmitigated challenges. The study established that social protection does possess crime prevention prospective. The study revealed that effective and sustainable social protection interventions would not only help fight crime but would debar the push factors that give rise to it.

Therefore, the viewpoint of this study is that increased social investment through the establishment of new programmes, or expanding the scope of existing ones, including making it sustainable would decrease crime incidences as well as address other deep-seathed undertones that provoke violent crime.

## Appendix 1

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### (Open-ended interview and FGD questions)

- 1) Are you aware of any social protection programme presently in place and are you or someone you know a beneficiary of any? If yes, can you tell which ones?
- 2) The Nigerian government has established a range of programmes to support people, for example the cash transfers for extremely poor people in the North who are affected by Boko Haram. Have you heard about them and what do you think of them?
- 3) The Federal government and also the Imo state government initiated a programme for young people to address unemployment. What are your thoughts on that?
- 4) What is your view about such programmes?
- 5) The programmes that have been initiated so far are meant to support people who live in poverty, the unemployed youths and those struggling with life. In your own opinion, can these programmes help prevent the occurrence of crime?
- 6) What in your opinion will be needed to prevent or eradicate crime in Nigeria?
- 7) What role can social protection play and in what ways? How would a social protection programme need to look like in order to prevent crime people from committing crime?

## Appendix 2

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### Display of FGD Participants

Participant	Sex	Age	Status	Job Title	Length of Residency
1	Female	34	Married	Trader	5 years
2	Female	28	Single	Banker	7 years
3	Male	33	Single	Unemployed	From birth
4	Female	25	Single	Unemployed	4 years
5	Female	45	Widowed	Petty trader	16 years
6	Male	36	Married	Oil worker	8years
7	Male	39	Single	Unemployed	9 years
8	Female	19	Single	Student	From birth
9	Male	21	Single	Bricklayer	3years
10	Male	60	Married	School Principal	32 years

### Display of Interview Participants

Participant	Sex	Age	Status	Job Title	Length of Residency
1	Male	34	Married	Banker	6 years
2	Male	28	Married	Public servant	From birth
3	Female	33	Single	Dancer	From birth
4	Female	25	Single	Unemployed	7 years
5	Female	45	Married	Business	18 years
6	Male	36	Married	Oil worker	10years
7	Female	39	Married	Unemployed	8 years
8	Female	28	Single	Teacher	From birth
9	Male	21	Single	Welder	9years
10	Male	50	Married	Landlord	29 years

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